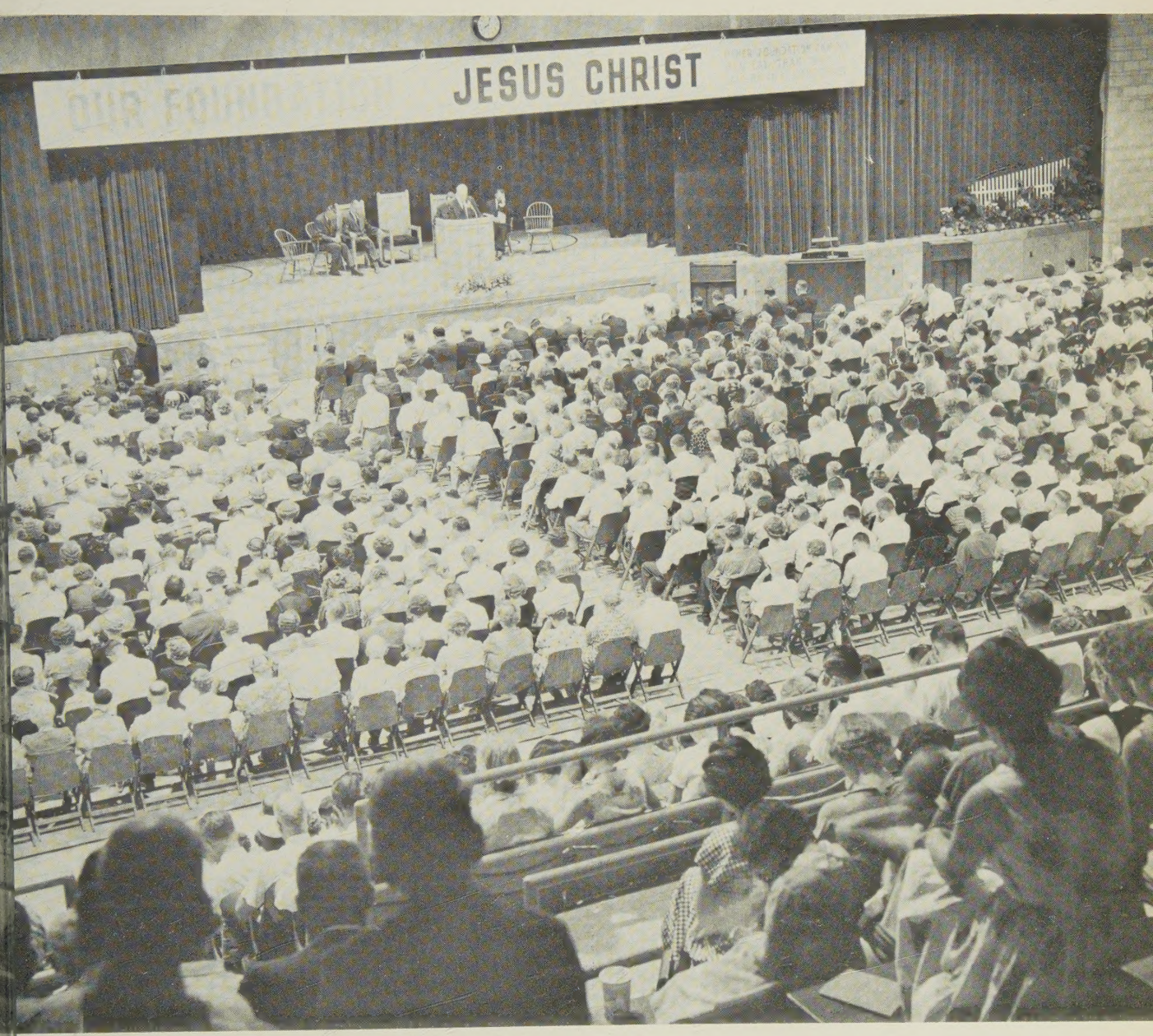
MENNONITE LIFE

October, 1959



Published in the interest
of the best
in the religious, social, and economic phases
of Mennonite culture

CENTENNIAL ISSUE

This issue is devoted to a large extent to the Centennial of the General Conference Mennonite Church and to some extent also to the Mennonite Brethren Church. The message, "The Lordship of Christ in a Desperate World" (147) challenges us to recognize the claim of the Lord in all areas of life. The messages of Roland R. Goering (160), H. A. Fast (163), and Erland Waltner (168) were presented at the Conference and challenge us during the Centennial year to rededicate ourselves to our calling. J. Herbert Fretz (153) presents his impressions pertaining to the pageant, "We Are Pilgrims," while Elmer Ediger (156) and Esko Loewen (158) report about other aspects of the Centennial Conference.

Frank C. Peters (176) presents the question regarding the attitude of the early Mennonite Brethren toward the Baptists. A. P. Toews reviews a book in which Bernhard Harder deals with the same question. The brief biography of Bernhard Harder who worked among Baptists and Mennonites for years will help us to understand his concern.

Harley J. Stucky (184) continues his challenging study in connection with the "Agricultural Revolution and the Task of the Church" (see also July issue) to which Mrs. Emry A. Ruth's article (188) is a fitting supplement.

WATCH YOUR EXPIRATION DATE

If your subscription expires with this issue you will find a notice to that effect enclosed, as well as a self-addressed envelope for your convenience in renewing your subscription. Note our special rates on the envelope. While you renew your subscription, why not take care of some Christmas shopping and add some subscriptions for friends and relatives? Note the special rates. Send orders directly to *MENNONITE LIFE,* North Newton, Kansas.

COVER:

Centennial General Conference Session, Bluffton, Ohio

Gerber's Studio

MENNONITE LIFE

An Illustrated Quarterly

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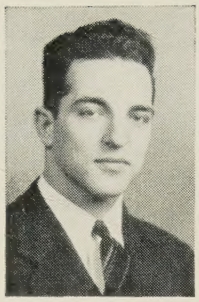
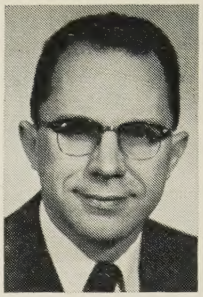
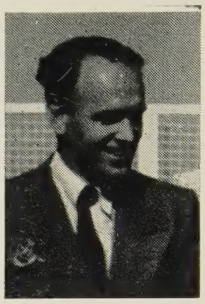
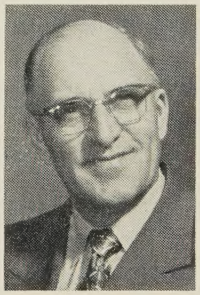
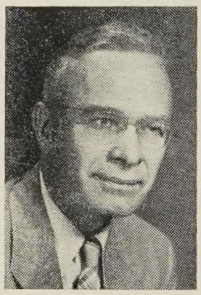
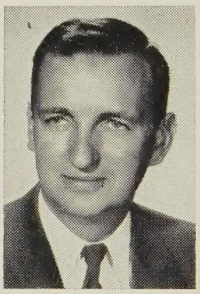
Contributors in This Issue

(From left to right)

ELMER NEUFELD, executive secretary of the M.C.C. peace section and candidate for a Ph.D. degree, University of Chicago (p. 147).
J. HERBERT FRETZ, pastor of Salem Mennonite Church, Freeman, S. Dakota, preached the Centennial sermon, Bluffton, Ohio (p. 153).
ELMER EDIGER, manager of Prairie View Hospital, Newton, Kansas, was in charge of the Conference discussion groups (p. 156).
ESKO LOEWEN, pastor of the Johannestal Mennonite Church, Hillsboro, Kansas, did M.C.C. work in The Netherlands (p. 158).
ROLAND R. GOERING, pastor of Halstead Mennonite Church, preached the Y.P.U. Centennial sermon, Bluffton, Ohio (p. 160).
H. A. FAST, professor at Bethel College, vice chairman of M.C.C., is a member of General Conference Christian Service Board (p. 163).

ERLAND WALTNER, president of the General Conference, delivered the Conference sermon at Bluffton, Ohio (p. 168).
FRANK C. PETERS, professor of Canadian Mennonite Brethren Bible College, Winnipeg, Manitoba (p. 176).
A. P. TOEWS received his Th.D. degree from Concordia Theological Seminary, St. Louis, Missouri (p. 179).
CORNELIUS KRAHN, editor of MENNONITE LIFE, studied under Bernhard Harder, Wernigerode am H., Germany (p. 181).
HARLEY J. STUCKY, professor of political science, Bethel College, spoke at the Farm Study Conference, 1958 (p. 184).
MRS. EMRY A. RUTH, homemaker and active church worker of Lorraine Avenue Mennonite Church, Wichita, Kansas (p. 188).

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nference Message Sponsored by Board of Christian Service

The Lordship of Christ in a Desperate World

By ELMER NEUFELD

WE live in an age of increased religious activity, and at the same time of terrifying moral and social problems, an age of religious fervor, l an age of moral stupor. This is an age in which ny are crying, "Lord, Lord!" but in which the will the Father is not apparent in our doings. This is age in which a majority of Americans count them- es Christians, but in which the prophetic voice of church is but dimly heard.

This Is a Desperate World

Many are the signs of our increased religious activity. want to appear as a pious people. United States rch membership has risen to a new high of over 100 lion. Church contributions reach into the billions ually. Graduate schools that once treated religion h scorn are today establishing new departments of gion. Nationalistic and political meetings — from erican Legion to Ku Klux Klan—make a point of wning their efforts with prayer. Our congressmen e their breakfast prayer groups. We have amended flag salute to remind ourselves and others that ours nation in some special sense "under God." We look n ourselves as a religious—a Christian—people!

For any signs of renewed reverence before God, the ristian should be grateful. Perhaps God can yet use perilous conditions of our day to drive us to repent- e. But let Christians also fear the sham piety which but a cloak for evil and adulterous acts. There is ger that our religious frenzy will drive us to baptize committed in pride, fear, and hate. Let us beware that show of religion which carefully polishes the side of the cup but leaves its inside full of corrupt ungodly practices!

Never before has there been such a dire need for a phetic Christian witness, and never before has it ned so hopelessly inadequate. Our world is facing a is in the relations of the races, especially even in ristian" America. The sins of the fathers are being ted upon our own generation. Already over a hun- d years ago, a great historian foretold of the tragic sequences that would result from America's sins nst the Negro. Fear, suspicion, and hate are driving to defy the law—to bomb, to lynch, and to rape— le a segregated Christian church stands silently by! Our world is facing a crisis in the distribution of erial goods. Millions of mothers still send innocent e ones to sleep with empty stomachs. Thousands of war refugees still wander about in homeless despair, while the "Christian" West wallows in luxury, spending herself for that which is not bread!

Our world faces a crisis in international relations. Deathly missiles stand poised for war—the perfected instruments of death and destruction. Like frightened animals, we are told to dig holes in our back yards, to load them with supplies, and hope that we might get to our shelters in time for a possible chance of survival!

In all of this we are driven to a crisis in emotional health and sanity. Over half of the hospital beds in the United States are used for the mentally ill. Of all our young men rejected for the draft in World War II, 17.7 per cent were rejected for reasons of mental health. High rates of suicide, homicide, and alcoholism all speak further of mental disturbances.

Add to these crises the statistics on delinquency and crime, the frenzied indulgence in sex, the corruption in government, business, and labor, and the picture is a despairing one indeed. *This is a desperate world!*

The cry of the prophets speaks of our own need for deliverance.

> The whole head is sick,
> and the whole heart faint.
> From the sole of the foot even to the head,
> there is no soundness in it,
> but bruises and sores
> and bleeding wounds . . . (Isaiah 1:5-6)

> Is there no balm in Gilead?
> Is there no physician there?
> Why then has the health of the daughter of my people
> not been restored? (Jeremiah 8:22)

Jesus Made Lord and Christ

With deep yearning and near envy, we look back upon the life of the early Christian church—a small handful of believers, compared with the millions of Christians of our day. Oh, for the spiritual power that possessed those early disciples! Here was power to heal physical illness! Power to discard outworn Jewish traditions! Power to crash through the Jew-Gentile barrier! Power to cross the boundaries of color and race! Power to drive men to repentance! Power to witness in the face of the severest persecution!

What wrought the great change, the transformation, in the lives of those early Christians? Among them were the disciples who had earlier sworn their denials of Jesus, disciples who had deserted Jesus in fear and despair!

What happened in their lives to change them into men of faith and power?

Yes, there was Pentecost, the baptism of the Holy Spirit. But what lay behind even this empowering experience? Through whom was the Holy Spirit received? What was the great fact, the good news, the exciting event, that drove them on? What was their great message?

Read it for yourselves. *God has raised Jesus and made him both Lord and Christ!*

> Men of Israel, hear these words . . . this Jesus . . . you crucified and killed by the hands of lawless men. But God raised him up . . . (Acts 2:22-24).
>
> This Jesus God raised up. . . . Being therefore exalted at the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, he has poured out this which you see and hear (Acts 2: 32-33).
>
> Let all the house of Israel therefore know assuredly that God has made him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom you crucified (Acts 2:36).
>
> The God of our fathers raised Jesus whom you killed by hanging him on a tree. God exalted him at his right hand as leader and Saviour. . . (Acts 5:30-31).

This Jesus with whom they had walked, who had been shamed and humiliated on the cross, this Jesus was glorified and exalted, and made Lord of all!

One of the Old Testament Scriptures quoted most in the New Testament is Psalm 110. Peter applies it to Jesus in that great Pentecost sermon. "The Lord said to my Lord, Sit at my right hand, till I make thy enemies a stool for thy feet" (Acts 2:34-35). Two notions are clearly contained here. Jesus has been given the place of honor and power. And in him is the victory over all the rebellious forces of history!

Jesus was not first of all a nice moral example whom the disciples should imitate through their own resolutions. This would have left the disciples in discouragement and despair. But Jesus had been given power—he is Lord and Christ! *Christ is Lord!*

This message is so much at the heart of their thinking that the believers call themselves witnesses of the Resurrection—witnesses of the fact that God raised him up—that he is Lord and Christ!

> . . . one of these must become with us a witness of his resurrection (Acts 1:22).
>
> This Jesus God raised up, and of that are we all witnesses (Acts 2:32).
>
> But you denied the Holy and Righteous One . . . whom God raised from the dead. To this we are witnesses (Acts 3:15. cf. 5:32).

This was their sure defense. When Stephen stood before the raging mob, he saw Jesus at the right hand of God. There was no reason for despair. Victory was in the hands of Christ! He is ruler over all!

Christ Denied As Lord

But you say that Christians have always recognized Jesus as Lord. True, this has been part of the orthodox Christian confession. Three words are brought together—Jesus, Christ, Lord; Kyrios, Jesus, Christos; Herr, Jesus Christus. The man Jesus, the Anointed One of God, has been made ruler over all. We have it in the words of the German hymn—"Jesus Christus herrscht als König! Alles wird Ihm untertänig. . . ."

But though this has been a part of the orthodox Christian confession, the Lordship of Christ has been repeatedly denied, not only in our actual practices, but in unbiblical interpretations of the gospel.

There was and still is prevalent among us a liberal interpretation of the gospel that denied the Lordship of Christ as the early believers understood it. On the one hand, this liberal view claimed to acknowledge the Lordship of Christ over all areas of life by focusing on the moral teachings of Jesus. But it failed to see Jesus raised from the grave and exalted at the right hand of God—the place of authority. It failed to see Jesus as Christ and Lord of his church, personally related to the members of this body.

Even in its moral teachings, liberalism went wrong. The emphasis was too much on a set of moral principles. The moral teachings were not seen as the natural outgrowth of a life lived in faith and personal relationship to God, but as a new set of rules. When the teachings of Jesus were viewed primarily as a new set of rules, they were seen optimistically as another example of the great moral heights to which man has aspired throughout history. As such an example, they were sometimes even found to be less developed than the rigorous moral teachings found elsewhere. This is exemplified even today when Jesus is seen as a great moral teacher of a nonviolent way of life later brought to perfection in the teachings of Gandhi!

The liberal interpretation tended to leave the Christian morally self-righteous. Sometimes it left us as pacifists ready to condemn with pride those who had not reached our levels of "moral perfection." It forgot that man, until he has experienced the forgiving love of God on the cross, is a proud, vain and selfish creature. The great moral teachings of the New Testament functioned as a lofty challenge to the "enlightened" believers, and never as the ultimate expression of a compassionate God, which should first of all drive us to shame and repentance.

Because liberalism did not really see Christ as the Lord over history, as the one who has the final victory over the rebellious powers of this world, it thought to find fulfillment of the kingdom of God here on earth. And in so doing it, substituted its own concept of the kingdom and its own methods. But today that dream has been shattered and broken! In all of this, Jesus was rejected as Lord, because he could not be looked upon in personal faith as the triumphant and victorious God!

However, there is prevalent among us yet another interpretation of the gospel that has loudly confessed Jesus as Christ and Lord, but has denied it in practice

Centennial General Conference session convening in Founders Hall, Bluffton College, Bluffton, Ohio, August 12-20, 1959.

l doctrine. This interpretation has made a kind of gic out of the great facts of the Crucifixion and the urrection. It has placed sole emphasis on a mystical erience of the individual with God, assuring him of sonal salvation. But it has left the individual free reject Christ's claims of Lordship in the other areas life.

uch a religion leaves the individual free to engage in racism of this world. Free to preach to the Negro Christ but to deny him the hand of Christian fellow-. Free to lead the Negro to the cross of Golgotha to avoid any sharing of his burdens here on earth. e to run away from our interracial communities, and n to send in an evangelist to save their black souls. e to claim a man for all eternity, but to deny him an r's fellowship on Sunday morning. Free to seek for a throne in glory but to deny him a chair in the ng room.

uch a religion leaves the individual free to engage he materialism of our Western culture. Free to spend selves in the seeking of riches while seeking to ap-se our consciences and our God by giving of our esses—even to claim God's blessing as the source of indulgent wealth! Free to tell the poor brother, d bless you, go in peace, be warmed and filled," hout giving him the things needed for his body.

oo often such a religion has left the individual with lequate answers to the deep emotional problems of Troubled church members—anxious and guilt-ridden me to their pastors seeking help, only to be driven into their miserable torment, by easy reassurance pious prayers, without serious dealing with their sin guilt. Nor does such an individualistic faith provide the loving brotherhood in which burdens are confessed and shared.

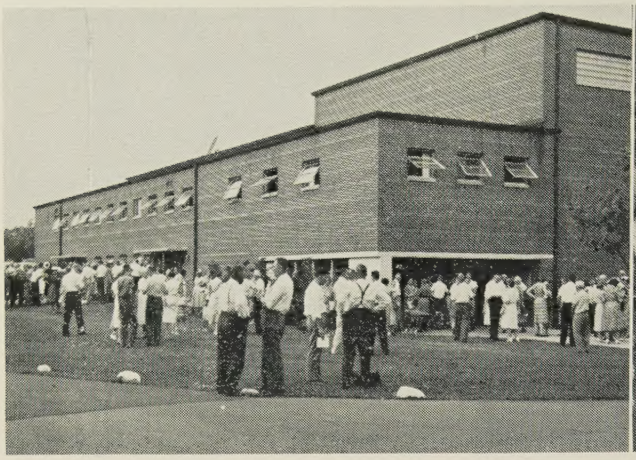
Such a religion leaves the individual free to engage in the nationalism and militarism of our day. Free to indulge in the narrow patriotism of our nation, in its violent feelings of anti-communism, and in its baptism of missiles and bombs for defense of the Kingdom. It left a recent group of Fundamentalist college students free to conclude that the Christians they found in national government "are not compromising their testimonies one bit" when these same Christian testimonies do not keep them from supporting H-bombs to be used against whole populations of people, including women and children. When the Christian carries the Bible in one hand and a sword in the other—seeking to justify the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki and the testing of bigger and "cleaner" bombs, the gospel begins to sound like hollow mockery! Here, too, the Lordship of Jesus is denied. Here, too, there is a lack of faith in him as ruler over all, and the individual presumes, like Peter in the Garden, that he can serve the Master with the sword.

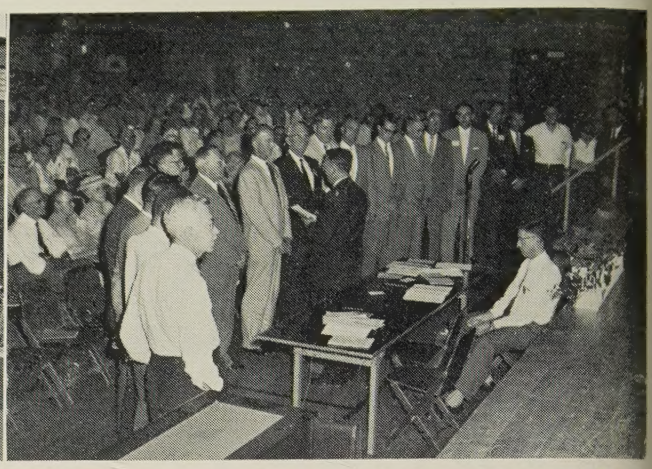
Thus man, in his subtle knowledge, continues to find ways of re-interpreting the gospel and of substituting the ways of this world for the ways of our Lord, of denying the very God which he claims to confess. Neo-orthodoxy with its "tragic necessities" writes its own answers to questions that belong to God. Modern theologians with their symbolic and mythological interpretations of the biblical revelation deny the risen Lord.

As a Mennonite people, we have not been inclined to spend much time in theological studies. Perhaps this is good. But we must be sufficiently aware of what is

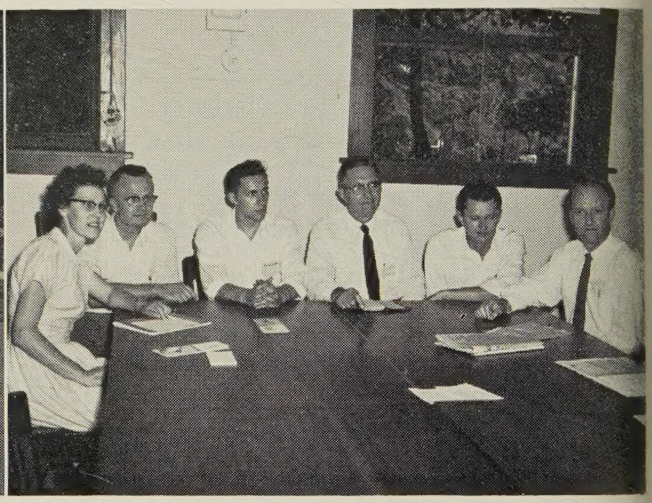
(Continued on page 171)

Scenes from the Centennial Conference



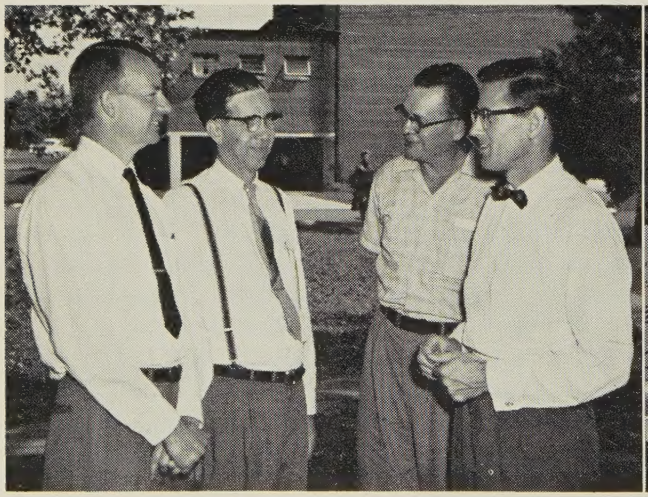


Founders Hall, Bluffton College, and (right) the reception of sixteen new congregations into the General Conference Mennonite Church.

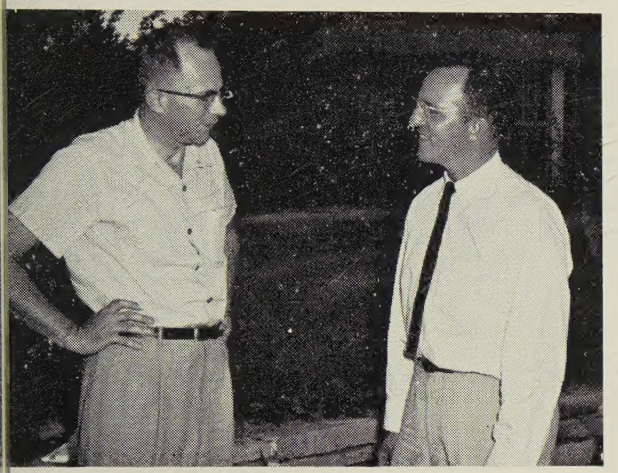


Harris Waltner, newly elected secretary; President Erland Waltner; Vice President I. I. Friesen. New and re-elected members of the Board of Missions.

New and re-elected members of the Board of Education and Publication and of the Board of Christian Service.

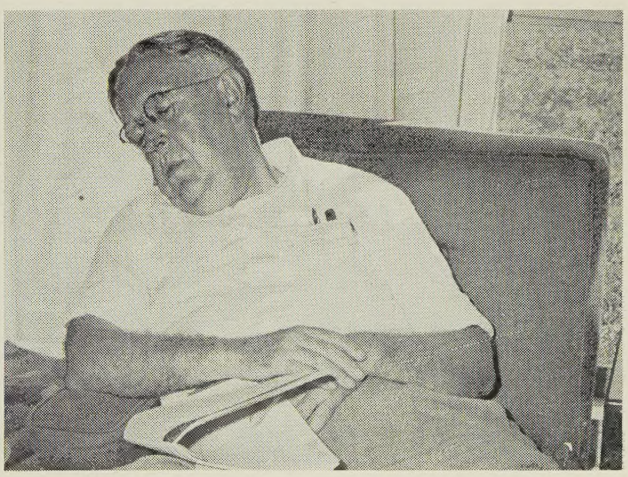


Loewen presents awards to the Centennial Hymn Contest winners (Amelia Mueller, Elizabeth K. Wedel, Mrs. Nathan Sprunger). Provision was made to entertain children at the Conference.

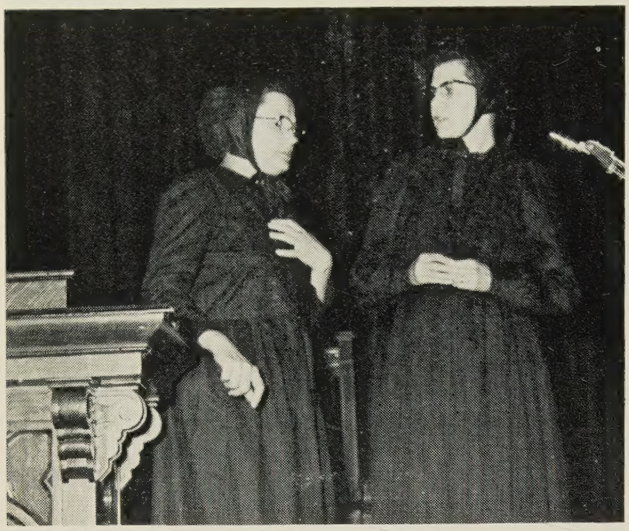


er Ediger, chairman of the discussion groups, and J. Herbert Fretz, who preached the Centennial sermon in Founders Hall. Former Methodist Episcopal Church of West Point, Iowa, in which the General Conference was founded May 28 and 29, 1860.

N. Meihuizen, The Hague, and Peter Klassen, Canada, formerly of Brazil brought greetings from abroad. A well-prepared full program in his hands, this conference delegate simply could not take all of it and went to sleep.



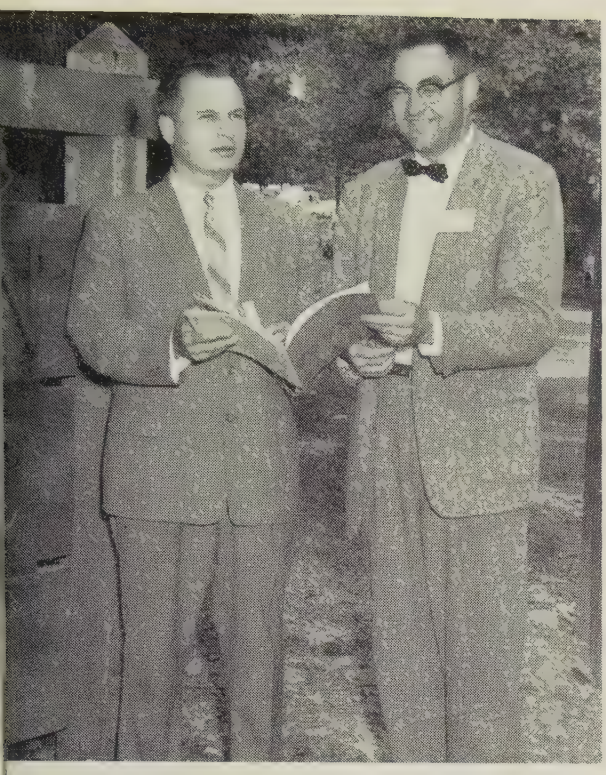
The Women's Missionary Association Pageant

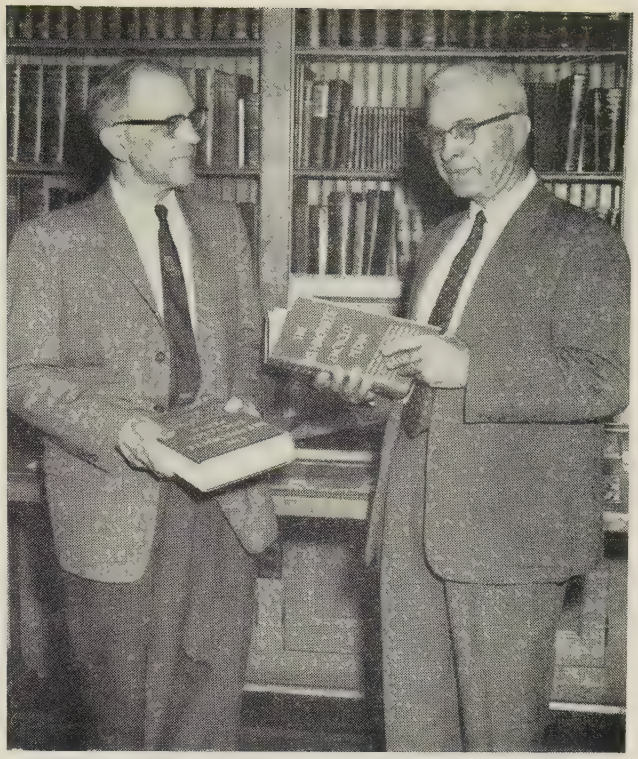


Members of recently established women's group of Berne debate the problem of leadership and Halstead women share tragic news from the S. S. Haurys.

Demonstrating women's activities at a clothing center. Another local group prepares for a missionary bazaar.

Annie Funk, missionary to India, taking leave of her Sunday School at Bally, Pa., and the Mt. Lake group sharing a repast of ZWIEBACK.





ference speaker, Franklin H. Littell and Eldon Graber, program committee. S. F. Pannabecker and Cornelius Krahn examine final volume of MENNONITE ENCYCLOPEDIA consisting of four volumes, 3,800 pages and over 10,000 articles.

The Centennial Pageant -- An Observation

"We are Pilgrims"

By J. HERBERT FRETZ

AS a General Conference Mennonite, I left the performance of the pageant, "We Are Pilgrims," at Founders Hall, Bluffton College, on Sunday, gust 16, with the over-all feeling of deep appreciation. This seemed to be the general reaction of the four usand who saw the pageant on that Sunday. It was a ng way of observing the Centennial.

he opening overture of Anabaptist melodies was outding, as was the other music compiled and arranged J. Harold Moyer, some from recently discovered eenth and seventeenth century sources. Other immee impressions were made upon the observer—the ble imaginative sets, the careful costuming, the light- and certainly the richness of orchestral music and d choir work. As the pageant continued, one became e and more aware of the very capable directing of herine Kaufman welding together in one crowded k a youthful cast from many places, and behind this creative work of Maynard Shelly, author of the eant.

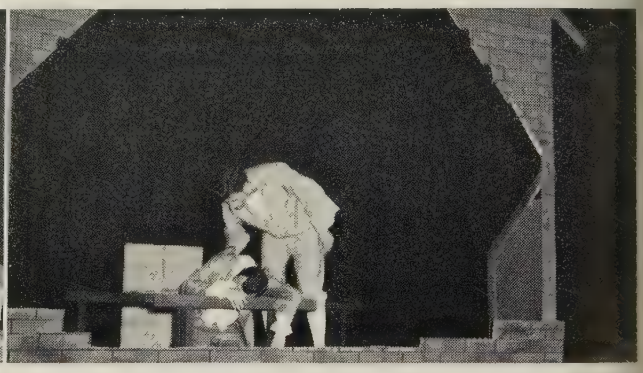
To them must go a lion's share of the appreciation one felt. Unlike the others, Shelly worked without professional training in his field, yet achieved a significant drama. In a real sense, this title, "We Are Pilgrims," epitomizes his own work and, shall we add, is symbolic of the awakening of creative art among American Mennonites in many areas today. If this production has revealed anything (and the Centennial Hymn Contest with its worthy selections); it has revealed the acceptance among conservative Christians, once suspicious of "art," of music, drama, and painting to the glory of God.

The cast, consisting of young ministers and students, performed excellently during the rehearsal and the two presentations on the Centennial Sunday. Katherine Kaufman, the director, was ably assisted by Dale Dickey (lighting), Darvin Luginbuhl (scenery), Eva Harshbarger (costumes), Earl Lehman (music), and others. The producer of the pageant, who sponsored and coordinated the production, was Cornelius Krahn, the chair-

(Continued on page 156)

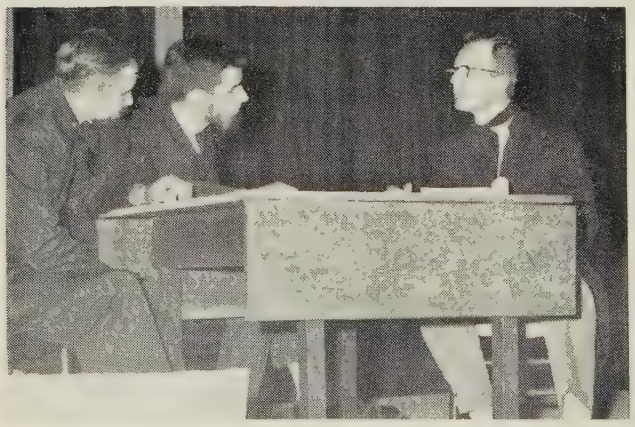
Scenes from the Pageant, "We are Pilgrims"

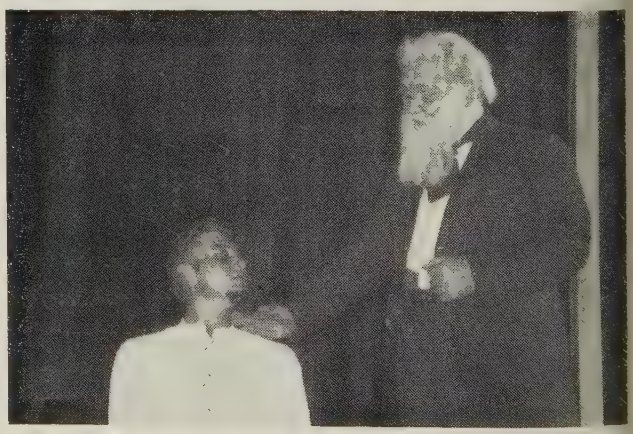
Grietje invites Menno Simons for a jolly time. Menno dedicates himself to Christ and renounces the Catholic Church.
The role of Menno Simons was played by Vern Preheim; Grietje by Opal Graber; Gertrude by Virginia Ortman;
Adrian by Marlan Kaufman.



Christopher Dock conducting the Skippack School where he is later found dead after having prayed for his children.
The role of Christopher Dock was played by Leland Harder; Jacob Freed by Gordon Dyck and Christopher Saur by Garry Waltner.

J. H. Oberholtzer presents his plan of union of Mennonites at West Point, Iowa. Christian Krehbiel assures Jacob Buller that Kansas is the place for them to settle.





narrator reads the Prologue and a member of the draft board challenges Donald Snyder, Mennonite draftee, to state his case. John Gaeddert was the narrator and John Harshbarger a member of the draftboard.

Earl Lehman, Bluffton, conducting the Centennial orchestra and chorus. Music was compiled and arranged by J. Harold Moyer.

ea:sal scenes of the pageant showing the cast, author and directors of pageant. (Maynard Shelly, Katherine Kaufman, Darvin Luginbuhl and Cornelius Krahn, front left.)

NEXT SHOWING OF PAGEANT

"We Are Pilgrims" will be shown at Bethel College, March 11 and 12, 1960, at Freeman College March and at other places. Watch for further announcements.

man of the Pageant Committee.

In the Prologue, the narrator recounts the stories of pilgrims in the Bible, and at the end of the pageant in the Epilogue he points out the straight and narrow path for us today. His strong voice and serious bearing rightly conveyed the feeling of historic Mennonite devotion. His attempt to contrast this at times with a more modern and informal spirit was good, though admittedly difficult. Menno Simons' struggle either to remain a parish priest or turn Anabaptist pilgrim in Episode I was quite good. Again Menno rightly reflected the seriousness of this struggle. Episode II was, in this writer's opinion, the best of all. The portrayal of the schoolmaster, Christopher Dock, was well done, and the ingredients of good drama were here—the realistic conflict between the hard-headed farmer and the aspiring young teacher with which most Mennonites today, young or old, could identify themselves; the contrast between these argumentative figures and the play of the school children; and all of this set alongside the lovable figure of the old, unconventional schoolmaster who dies on stage at the time when his work is being recognized. All of this adds up to a sort of Mennonite "Goodbye, Mr. Chips."

Episodes III and IV delved deeply into the facts of the General Conference story itself—the founding of the General Conference in Iowa in 1860, and the coming of the Mennonites from Russia and Prussia in the 1870's. This may have contributed to the lack of action and more intricate thought patterns in these episodes. Perhaps it was fair that a certain knowledge pertaining to the General Conference should be assumed, and that the didactic might vie with the dramatic here, for after all, the pageant was written for a General Conference audience. However, an absence of dramatic conflict in Episode III —three Mennonite preachers agree without an iota of difference! and, in Episode IV—the inability one feels to properly identify the many figures coming and going, were weaknesses one need not expect from the limitations of the materials. In both scenes, the women do provide refreshing bits of contrast and humor, though not enough to carry the scenes.

Episode V, the modern Draft Board scene, was very good. The tableaus symbolizing the many facets of the worship and work of the General Conference portrayed on stage as the Mennonite youth, Donald Snyder, pleads his case before the Draft Board member, Mr. Harrison, was a fine idea though somewhat difficult to move and depict in rapid sequence. The acting of the skeptical Dr. Harrison was well done.

The closing Finale with the audience joining the choir and cast in singing a final hymn underlined the program's statement that the pageant was meant to be an experience in worship. The General Conference deeply appreciated the offering of this pageant as an act of devotion and worship. We sincerely hope that this production may be given again in other General Conference communities during this Centennial year, and that they, with us, may also be inspired by an experience of worship to the glory of God in Jesus Christ! In so many ways we are pilgrims.

The Discussion Group Method on Conference Level

By ELMER EDIGER

THE pageant at the 1959 Bluffton Conference portrayed the first General Conference Mennonite Church session as being a small, face-to-face relationship with each delegate responsibly involved. There seemed to be an awareness of the Holy Spirit working in this group wrestling process.

In contrast one hundred years later, we now have a large million-dollar corporate operation representing fifty thousand members largely in the hands of about sixty board members and officers. The work of some of the boards in turn is so large that decision-making depends more and more upon recommendations of full-time executive people and executive committees. The work of the triennial General Conference sessions of delegates from the congregations seems almost inevitably to have become that of listening to reports and then performing the most crucial task, that of electing the board members and officers.

In this context, the time for discussion on the floor is of necessity quite limited. On the average, one anticipates a few questions of information or clarification and perhaps an occasional dissenting concern or a critical blast. In most situations very little discussion follows. There are those rare exceptions then when some big issue with widely differing viewpoints and strong feelings has absorbed an hour or more of tense discussion.

From my brief history of attending General Conference sessions, which dates back to Souderton in 1941, I had the impression that one mark of a "good conference" was an avoidance of vigorous disagreement on the floor. An exception to this seemed to be the Winnipeg conference discussion in 1956 on the seminary issue. Regardless of the final decision on the seminary location, most people felt satisfied about the rather intense discussion. Why? Delegates knew in advance that this issue was to be discussed, time was allowed for it, differences were

ected, and there was a mature approach on the part most participants even though there were strong con- tions and feelings.

Some people accept as inevitable the fact that we are arge corporation, that we must accept our limitations time, that we must be realistic about the responsibility, l that we must adopt some large group methods of egating responsibility. Others have felt uncomfortable out this trend of giving most policy responsibility to ards and in turn most operational responsibility to the ployees. In the honest effort to take care of detailed licy and operational decision-making, boards and Con- ence have sometimes become "snowed under" and have ually not used their time on the most crucial issues. general, our boards and conferences have sought to "businesslike" and "democratic" and thus keep de- ion-making as close to the congregational delegates or ir elected representatives as seemed reasonably possible. e have given very little thought on how we can sense Holy Spirit working in such a group process and ganization.

The Study Conference Method

As a fresh ray of light into this apparently necessary elegating" development came the experience of the dy conferences. The current pattern of study confer- es came to us as a General Conference from the MCC inona Peace Study Conference held in 1950 which in n had been inspired by an interdenominational De- it Peace Conference held just previously. The Eden ace Study Conference of 1953 was the first major study nference experience within the General Conference. At s study conference participants felt the thrill of care- preparation and the deliberate discussion in a fellow- p of believers honestly searching together for the will God. To a great extent, differing points of view were nly welcomed with a brotherly desire to understand values involved rather than simply with a desire to ute.

In the course of the Eden conference discussion on at kind of a church it takes to produce loving and non- istant Christians, one small discussion group in par- ular became convinced (would we say by the Holy rit?) that we needed to wrestle with our concept of urch at some future study conference. The Believers' urch Study Conference in 1955 was the result. At our neral Conference sessions the group again experienced ne characteristics of the Believers' Church and this inly through the small, face-to-face discussion groups.

Discussion Groups at Winnipeg

The Believers' Church Study Conference in turn gave program committee planning for the 1956 Winnipeg nference a vision and courage to propose a radical parture from previous conference arrangements. The ire conference group was to be broken up into small cussion groups to devote at least one hour on each rd report.

From the summaries of the final discussion session at Winnipeg came statements such as the following: "The experience in discussion groups was one of the high lights of the conference. This was one of our best conferences." "It is more in keeping with our conference polity. The body has an opportunity to speak." "The discussion group opportunity gives one a feeling of being a part of the conference. Understanding and a feeling of sharing is more important than the conclusions." "It helps to clarify issues when we have an opportunity to ask questions of the board representatives in the discussion groups." "Discussion groups give opportunity to move in new directions." "One can sense a ground swell of feeling and conviction through these discussion groups." "One feels as though he can speak directly to the boards." "Discussion groups promote more intimate fellowship among the delegates and the visitors. This cultivates the quality of a believers' church statement." "These discussion groups should not replace adequate discussion of major issues on the floor of the assembly, e.g., the seminary issue, the believers' church statement."

From the experience at Winnipeg, it was amazing how unanimous people were in accepting discussion groups as a natural part of the 1959 Bluffton Conference.

The Discussion Groups at Bluffton

The stated purposes of these discussion periods as given to the discussion leaders prior to the 1956 and 1959 conferences were as follows: "1) to make possible more participation; 2) to get better constituency understanding of work and problems; 3) to receive brotherly counsel from the constituency."

In the orientation session of discussion leaders, recorders and board resource people held at Bluffton, it was further pointed out that these discussion groups were to be an extension of the conference floor discussion and discussion leaders were in a sense assistant moderators to the conference chairman. By having twenty groups, we were multiplying the time available for conference delegate participation by twenty. With four such discussion hours during the conference, floor discussion time was increased from four to eighty hours! The groups were set up mainly for the purpose of clarification and the gathering of questions and concerns. Groups were also given freedom to take "straw votes," to draw up resolutions, or simply make suggestions which could go through the resolutions committee to the conference floor. It was stated that new ideas, new approaches could be given birth by the Spirit in these small groups perhaps better than anywhere else in the Conference.

It was significant that the program committee had selected Franklin H. Littell as the main speaker at the Bluffton Conference, and that he presented a lecture on the work of the Holy Spirit, basically a theological interpretation of the discussion process in a believers' group. Littell stated that the purpose of such discussion is dis-

(Continued on page 190)

After the Centennial Conference

By ESKO LOEWEN

THE other day we met a couple who had been at the Conference at Bluffton. When the Conference was discussed, one of the first questions asked was, "Well, what did you think of the Conference?" This is as it should be, for a Conference has as its purpose the evaluation of the work of the church. It is a time when what has been done is reported and weighed. It is a time when decisions are made which chart the course for the future. This means value judgments must be made, convictions and concerns must speak out, and the mind of the brotherhood, under the Lordship of Jesus Christ, must decide on the course of action to be taken.

The Bluffton Conference was this and even more. It was the Centennial Conference marking the first hundred years from the time John Oberholtzer and his half dozen brethren conceived the plan for the Conference at West Point, Iowa, in 1960. That period one hundred years ago must indeed have been a time of ferment and awakening. Within the Mennonite brotherhood there was in Ohio the leading of John Holdeman which resulted in the Church of God in Christ, Mennonite; in Russia there was the movement which gave rise to the Mennonite Brethren church. The Oberholtzer movement along with these others marked a stirring and awakening within the brotherhood which was seen as in need for spiritual renewal.

None of those movements taking place in this period of awakening one hundred years ago was aware of something else which also took place in 1859. In western Pennsylvania, the first producing oil well was brought in. Far beyond the imagination of anyone at that time were the fruits of that innocent discovery. The fruits of oil and the fruits of Oberholtzer met at Bluffton in 1959. The cultural framework in which the church of Jesus Christ works today is, in part, a by-product of oil. The Bluffton Conference proclaiming Jesus Christ as the foundation of the church is the fruit of several concerned brethren in West Point, Iowa.

It is in the light of the extremely dynamic change taking place among us that one must seek to evaluate the Bluffton Conference. Many of us can remember when the first executive secretary moved an old office desk, a used typewriter, files, and other needed supplies to the new Conference headquarters at 722 Main Street, Newton, Kansas. Indeed, this writer assisted in the first remodeling of that building for such use. The building was far too large for the several workers at that time. That was not even twenty-five years ago.

Since that time (approximately 1939), there has been an explosion of new development within the Conference brotherhood. The seminary has been established, the C.P.S. witness made, the vast program of relief undertaken, the conference press begun, the conference constitution changed and the Conference reorganized, a new hymnary published, a new college in Canada instituted, camps and camp property have been obtained, mental institutions begun, a youth organization and youth office solidly based, missions in Colombia, Japan, Formosa and in a co-operative arrangement have been undertaken in the Congo. Churches in South America joined the Conference, and locally, colleges, hospitals, homes for the aged, the seminary and churches were built, rebuilt, or remodeled at a rate never before equalled in a similar period of time. The list of these things could be enlarged.

What does all this mean? In the *Christian Century*, comment was made about the General Conference Centennial. It had this to say, "Historically they have been somewhat withdrawn from American public life, exerting a quiet influence as a 'peace' church with due stress on the durable virtues. The times now deny them the luxury of isolation. . . . There is no question but that the Mennonites will now more than ever influence America and America the Mennonites. Their enlarged life brings enlarged questions: Will they be able to retain in the time of emergence the values they nurtured in the time of withdrawal?" Oil—a symbol of the culture of modern American life—and Oberholtzer—the vision of a deeply consecrated and spiritual man seeing the witness the Mennonite church needed to make—these two have met at Bluffton!

One senses at times something of a tension between the older brethren who prayed and labored for the emergence of the Mennonite church into the mainstream of life and witness, and the younger ministry whose concern is not emancipation, but strength to guide that which is emancipated. The great question in the minds of many today is what will happen now that "oil" and Oberholtzer have met? Will the church join the ranks of those who worship culture, the good life, the American way? Or, will the church, reaching into the rich treasury of her history and the limitless resources of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, relate herself in this new encounter in a manner that will make Christ the victor? As one looks out across our brotherhood and hears of the almost shocking materialism of some of our members—of too many of our members—one wonders whether

lubricating process has not already gone quite far! It is in the light of our present condition that one begin to evaluate the Centennial Conference. From nerous sources in the local congregation, in the press in private discussion, one hears voices of concern out the present state of conference structure. Here a few such expressions:

For some time it has seemed to me that we have been going almost too much into organizational and promotional machinery. . . .

Our present prosperity is facing the church with needs as great as in the times of persecution. . . .

One could get the impression that Conference and Boards go together rather than Conference and congregations. . . .

One is thrilled at the evidences of the outreach of the church of Christ through our denomination . . . there loomed up from time to time in the minds of some of us the haunting question of 'inreach'. . . .

From these expressions, many of similar nature, one conclude, first, that the organizational structure of Conference as established in 1950 has been remarky effective (conference giving in 1950 was $500,000, 1958 almost $900,000); second; its very effectives has produced stress, particularly in a time of social d economic revolution when our rural-based people moving to the city and becoming urbanized; third, very prosperity we enjoy is a new challenge to our ritual condition likely more corrosive than persecution. t has been my observation that the spiritual life of person is most seriously challenged at that moment en he thinks he has 'arrived.' The Pharisees were f-assured; this very condition of self-confidence was ir downfall and the point of our Lord's most severe demnation. It was to a completely self-confident ael that Amos lashed out with his most severe prophes.

t would seem we are moving to this point as a Conence. If the explosion of the last twenty years has meaning, it suggests both tremendous potential along- great peril. We are essentially an 'immigrant rch.' We are that whether our people came two ndred years ago or twenty years ago. We need only k at our names. Some of those in our immigrant rches, when they became emancipated, have thrown the baby out with the bath, thinking that by adopting American or Canadian ways, they had 'arrived.' The language struggle in Canada is not over whether a particular language is sacred but what the change of language symbolizes. If it symbolizes an undisciplined emancipation, some would say it is better to maintain the language and suffer the consequent losses. If this adjustment symbolizes a desire to enter into and witness to the world as others would say, then change is in order. The confusion found as this issue is faced typifies the confusion encountered on many fronts—what is Christian commitment, how do we understand the authority of the Bible, is the C. O. witness central or peripheral in Christian life, how do we enter the urban scene and establish churches, what do we do with the brother in the need of discipline, will we receive a person into full fellowship in the church on the basis of his confession—or do matters of race, social and economic status enter in? These and many other questions face us as a Conference. Decisions must be made and action must follow decision. Therefore, the strengthening of 'inreach' becomes most pressing.

In closing, a word about the Conference machinery itself. One finds those moments when the Conference is stirred by encounters with vital and living issues. It must be perplexing business for those who must handle routine business to know how to reach below the routine to the vital. One solution might be to have all printed routine reports in the hands of the churches in May, reserving Conference time for 'the issues.' Conference structure might then double or triple the time for discussion sessions with the conference executive more strictly controlling board allotted time by sharply reducing the number of speeches and increasing the time for small group discussion as well as floor debate. Included in such an arrangement would be the plan to establish a channel whereby the concerns and problems not alone of the boards, but of the local church as well, might be brought to the Conference. Some such plan might make possible a Conference-congregation dialogue which at present is missing.

The celebration of the Centennial sharpens for us the awareness of where we are. The wisdom of our leadership, and the depth of our commitment to Jesus Christ as both Lord and Saviour will decide where we go.

Some of Our Weaknesses

A weakness of the Mennonites in their witness has n a lack of realization that they have a responsibility only for the spiritual, social and cultural nurture of r members who move to the cities, but also for others. se of the brotherhood who move to cities should be nucleus or spearheads around which an outreach pron is built. Because of the constant shift of the popula- from the rural to the urban areas and the lack of on and courage along these lines, the Mennonites are dly holding their own as far as numbers are concerned day when the population increases rapidly.

That Mennonites have been and are being influenced by so many unstable movements and individuals is mostly due to the fact that they have lost sight of the significance of a sound doctrinal structure based on the Bible. It can easily be said that the course the General Conference will take in its second century may depend to a large extent on how well we will succeed in finding a balance along these lines. No blind acceptance of the best formulated statements of doctrines, however, can take the place of a living faith in Jesus Christ as a personal Saviour and the obligation to express this as a personal witness.

FROM *A Century of Witness* (pp. 8-10.)

Y. P. U. Centennial Sermon

A Heritage Worthy of Our Loyalty

By ROLAND R. GOERING

"The Lord forbid it me, that I should give the inheritance of my fathers unto thee" (I Kings 21:3).

The Fires of Our Fathers

A STORY is told of an old mountaineer, known as "Uncle Henry," who had lived for many years on the slope of a mountain overlooking a valley. The time came when the government was preparing to put a deep lake in that valley and proceeded to condemn the land and move out all the old time settlers. The water of that lake was also, in due time, to cover the ground and cabin where Uncle Henry lived. When the government men went to see him about moving, he refused to move even though they offered him five times as much as his land and cabin were worth. Regardless of all the persuasive power that the government would use, Uncle Henry still kept saying: "Nope, I won't move." The government men then went up the mountain to a spot at a higher altitude not too far removed from the old man's log cabin and here they built for him a modern stone house with all the modern conveniences. Then they brought the old mountaineer to this new home and said: "Look, Uncle Henry, this is all yours, a stone cabin, plastered rooms, running water, a bath, a nice kitchen with an electric oven and all the finest conveniences."

"Nope, I don't want it, I won't move," replied the old man.

"Why not, Uncle Henry?" they asked, "Why not?"

"Gotta keep that fire going down there in the front room," said the old man. "My great-grandpap kept it going, my grandpap kept it going, my pappy kept it going, and I'm going to keep it going too—I am! Can't let my pappy's fire go out nohow."

So what did the government men do? That group of engineers with typical American imagination got a truck, gathered up the living embers of the ancient fire and transported them, together with Uncle Henry, to the new house on the hill overlooking the lake to be, and said to the old man: "There's your fire, Uncle Henry, we won't let it go out and you can keep it burning up here as well as down in the valley." Uncle Henry saw the logic of this arrangement and agreed to accept the new home now that the fires of his fathers were burning on the new hearth.

This man wanted to keep the fires of his fathers burning, faithfully and perpetually, and we cannot blame the old mountaineer. Fortunately, the government had engineers with imagination and some respect for the traditional sentiments of the old man. Indeed most of us Mennonites would do well to hold more reverence and respect for the fires of our fathers—the fires of faith and religion—and keep them burning faithfully and perpetually.

I do not know how true the story is, but it is indeed a good story and not at all beyond the realm of possibility. In fact, I have no reason to doubt its authenticity. But now there is another story. This one taken from the Bible. In many ways this story in the Bible is similar to the one of the mountaineer. Here too we have a man who is unwilling to surrender that which had been handed down to him from his fathers, and here too he refuses to give it up even though he is asked to do so by the king and is offered more in exchange than his possession is worth. The king is, in this case, the wicked king of Israel, Ahab by name; and the man is Naboth, who is the possessor of a vineyard. It so happened that the vineyard lay adjoining the king's palace. The king wanted to have it so that he might make it a garden of herbs to which he could retire in the cool of the evening and rest from the hard and vexing task of ruling a contentious people. Ahab was an acquisitive sort of person, and his wife, Jezebel, was even more acquisitive than he. They were accustomed to getting what they wanted irrespective of the method used to get it, but they were not accustomed to dealing with a man like Naboth—a man who had the courage of his convictions. When the king said unto Naboth, "Give me thy vineyard!" Naboth answers: "The Lord forbid it me that I should give the inheritance of my fathers unto thee." We feel like cheering Naboth for this courageous answer.

It so happened that this particular vineyard was a prize possession of Naboth's. It had been in the possession of his family for generations, and he was not willing to part with the inheritance of his fathers. It was not the price of the land in which he was interested. Ahab had offered to give him the worth of it in money or to exchange a better vineyard with him, but he was unwilling to dispose of the tradition of his fathers.

The story is a familiar one and we all know how it ends. The king's wife, Jezebel, with her sly and crafty, twisted and evil mind, managed to obtain the vineyard for her husband, though it meant having Naboth slain to acquire it. Naboth gave his life rather than to give

ng people of all ages were attending various sessions in connection with the Centennial Conference.

the inheritance of his fathers. We are impressed the courageous and loyal stand of Naboth who was willing to dispose of the tradition of his fathers. ike that firm and decisive statement of Naboth, 't you?

"The Lord forbid it me that I should give the in- tance of my fathers unto thee." These words are become the theme of this message.

Now there are many modern day Ahabs who are ng to get us, as Mennonites, to surrender the in- tance of our fathers, too. They are offering us any- g and everything if we would but surrender the in- tance we have received. They are offering us free- n, saying: "Why be tied to the traditions of your ers?" They are offering us popularity, saying: "Why different? Join the crowd, hop on the bandwagon, one of us." They are offering us ease, saying: "Why den yourself with weatherworn principles and doc- es?" Yes, the time has been when they have even red to us possessions and jobs if we would but rid selves of the traditions of our fathers.

Now the question is: "Dare we surrender these tra- ons?" There is, of course, no point in keeping the of our fathers burning simply for the sake of keep- them burning. There might be no point in being l to the heritage which is ours just for the sake of lty. It must be worthy of our loyalty. Now there o question in my mind that it is. It is a priceless tage.

Why do I say our heritage is worthy of our loyalty? y it because it has been bought with a great price.

A Heritage Bought With a Great Price

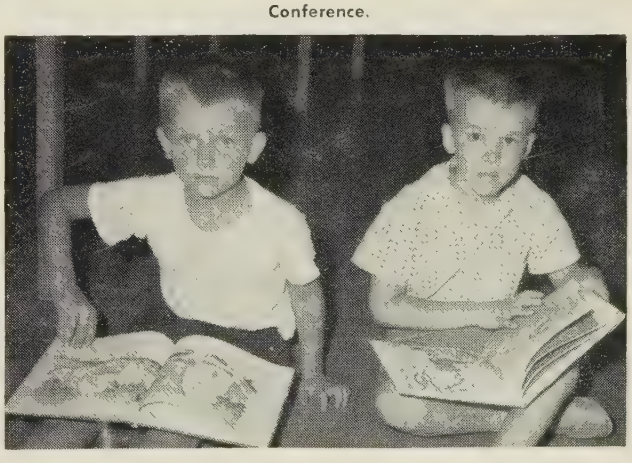
do not need to remind you of the terrible suffering, ifice, persecution and martyrdom that our forefathers ered in making this heritage ours. To be disloyal ur heritage would mean that we are unmindful of, ungrateful for, and unmoved and untouched by, the t cost and sacrifice that our fathers bought. There is a verse in the Book of Lamentations which is so applicable to Christ. The words are these: "Is it nothing to you, all ye that pass by? Behold and see if there be any sorrow like unto my sorrow?" Is it nothing to you? Yes, His suffering is something to us. It does something to us. When everything else fails to move us, His sacrifice and His suffering do not fail. When Christ's teaching failed to convince the people and his persuasion failed to win them, it was his suffering which drew them, as Jesus said it would when he said: "I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto me." Man may go through life unmindful of Christ until he remembers the cross and then it is most difficult to be unmindful.

Consequently, I say that to be inconsiderate of any great suffering or unmoved by any sacrifice is to be most ungrateful.

A father often sweats and labors and toils so that his children may have some of the earthly goods with which to start out in life. When one of the children then lavishly and foolishly spends his inheritance or turns out to be a disgrace to his father's name, the father weeps, and he has much reason to do so. Weeping, he may say: "Does all my sacrifice, labor, sweat, and toil which I bore for you mean nothing to you?" It can only be a very ungrateful child that can take such a price lightly. So, likewise, it can be only a very ungrateful child that can take lightly the price paid by our forefathers for our religious heritage.

All eternal values can only be gained at a great price. The question might, however, be asked: "Can we also turn this statement around and say that, therefore, whenever and wherever a great price is paid then something of eternal value has been gained?" This may not necessarily be true, but time and experience have proved it to be quite a dependable rule of life. Paul, the apostle, paid a great price in stonings and suffering and shipwreck, but see what he gained—he succeeded in carrying the Gospel across the sea into Europe. This is of eternal value. Peter, the apostle, also paid a great price

These two boys have their own way of enjoying the Centennial Conference.



in imprisonment and beatings, but look what he gained —he came to be the rock that Jesus prayed he would be and around him, to a great extent, the infant church was built. This, too, is of eternal value. Jesus Christ paid a great price with a thorn-crowned head and a wounded side and nail-pierced hands, but by it too something of eternal value was gained. It drew mankind unto him and into his Kingdom. Thus, we might almost conclude that that which costs a great price must be of immeasurable value. What is worth dying for must be of eternal value. The great price paid for our heritage indicated that it is worthy of our loyalty. Our forefathers considered it worth dying for.

They climbed the steep ascent of heaven
Through peril, toil and pain,
O God to us may grace be given
To follow in their train.

"The Lord forbid it me that I should give the inheritance of my fathers unto thee."

A Heritage Founded on the Bible

Our heritage is also worthy of our loyalty because it stands for something. It stands for principles and doctrines that are Biblically founded. A religion, a faith, that does not stand for something is not worthy of its name. Even an individual that does not stand for something hardly stands at all. Unless you stand for something, you have nothing on which to stand. We believe that our Mennonite faith has a sound basis on which to stand and a worthy purpose for which to stand. To stand for something is very often very costly. On our way to Bluffton we stopped in Springfield, Illinois, to see the Lincoln home and museum. In the museum there is a small replica of the scene of Lincoln's assassination. Slumped in the chair is the president with a bullet wound in his body. On the floor beneath the balcony is the assassin trying to make his escape sure. President Lincoln stood for something. He stood for the liberation of the Negro slave, and it cost him his life. To stand for something is often costly. It was also costly for our Mennonite forefathers to stand for something. They upheld and stood by certain principles and doctrines which they taught and which they believed. So strongly did they believe them that they were willing to give up their life rather than their faith. It takes firm convictions to pay such a price. They were convinced that that which they believed, and that which they upheld, and that which they taught was true. Because they were convinced that it was true, that is why they could not give it up.

When we no longer have any definite principles or doctrines which we uphold, then we have lost our excuse for continuing to exist as a denomination. No organization has any reason for existence unless it stands for certain principles. The Mennonite church would have no reason to exist if it did not uphold and maintain certain principles and doctrines that are unique to the Mennonite church. Some of the principles and doctrines which our Anabaptist forefathers upheld and died for are now the very things that other denominations cherish with us. One of these is their teaching of separation of church and state. "Religion is a matter of conscience," they said, "and neither an ecclesiastical hierarchy nor any political authority has a right to dictate to the individual in matters of faith." Who today, in our land, does not now cherish the privilege that we enjoy, of freedom of religion? Even in some of the countries of Europe where our forefathers were once martyred for this teaching, this privilege is now cherished.

The teachings of our forefathers form a long list of doctrines which logically follow one another and are interrelated and interlinked. That they should form a logical chain can only be expected since they are all Scripturally founded. Let us see how interlinked some doctrines are: the teaching that the church should be composed only of those who voluntarily dedicate themselves to God leads logically to the practice of adult baptism by which they said that baptism should only be administered to believers and repentant people. This leads just as logically to the practice of nonconformity to the world. This leads to the teaching and doctrine of church discipline. In this manner, we might continue and find that all the doctrines and practices which they taught are logically interlinked with one another. This is true because they are all Biblically founded.

The belief that Jesus is the Son of God, the Messiah, and the belief that the words which he speaks are the words of his Father, leads us logically to the belief that, therefore, all his teachings, including those which are summarized in the Sermon on the Mount, must be the rule and guide for our conduct and life and must be obeyed. Many in this day would have us believe that the teachings of Jesus are unrealistic and impractical for this day and age. They would say that many of the teachings of Jesus are too idealistic for this age, and that they will not work in our modern world. To say such things is to imply that Jesus was a dreamer and a visionary, one who lived in a world of phantasy, one who did not know what he was talking about. It would be to say that Jesus did not speak as one having authority, or as being the Son of God, and that the words which he spoke were not the words of the Father. Our forefathers were convinced that the words of Jesus were the words of truth. Their doctrines were based on his teachings. Upon these doctrines they stood and for them they died.

We hold the challenge of a noble line
God grant us grace to give the countersign.

"The Lord forbid it me that I should give the inheritance of my fathers unto thee."

A Heritage to Live By

Finally, our heritage is worthy of our loyalty because is a heritage that gives us a challenging task. Unrthy is a heritage that gives us only something to ssess and no duty to perform, that gives us only someng to hold and nothing to propagate, that gives us ly something to receive and nothing to give. In the terial realm, we often, erroneously so, believe the posite to be true. We think the greatest heritage is t which drops into our lap a great wealth of possesn with no obligations attached, with no faithfulness quired. I am sure that Naboth, who spoke the words our text, did not feel that way about the inheritance received of his fathers. He felt duty bound to a tain faithfulness. Now our Mennonite heritage is rthy of our loyalty, because it obligates us with a at service to render, it presents us with a mission perform, it entrusts us with a witness to bear. If s Mennonite church does not propagate this witness d these doctrines, it is already dead. We have a misn to perform. We have a doctrine to uphold. We e a message to propagate. We have a testimony to e. If we do not fulfill our service nor bear our wits, I am certain that God will find someone else who l. If we lay down the torch, someone else will take up. This is made clear to us by Jesus when he said: herefore I say unto you, the kingdom of God shall taken away from you, and shall be given to a nation nging forth the fruits thereof." These words of Jesus re spoken at the conclusion of one of his parables. The parable was of a householder who planted a vineyard and set a hedge about it and digged a winepress in it, and built a tower, and then let it out to husbandmen while he went into a far country. In due time the owner sent out his servants, in turn, to collect the rent. The wicked husbandmen beat one of these, wounded another, and stoned another. Then the owner sent out his own son. This one was taken by these husbandmen and killed.

This parable, it is always assumed, was directed at the Jews who were accustomed to think of themselves as being the husbandmen in God's vineyard. Part of their obligation, as the workers in God's vineyard or as God's chosen race, was to present the Messiah unto the world. Christ was to be revealed through them. They, however, beat and stoned and wounded the prophets who came each in his turn, and finally they killed the Son himself. But the stone which the builders rejected was to become the head of the corner and nothing can stop him from becoming that head. That is to say: if the Jewish race does not present Jesus as the Messiah, God will find someone else that will. That Kingdom of God shall be taken away from you and given unto a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof. Now the same thing is true concerning our Mennonite faith. If we, the Mennonite church, fail to bear witness to our doctrines and to propagate our Christian heritage, they will certainly be taken from us and given to a denomination that will.

"The Lord forbid it me that I should give the inheritance of my fathers unto thee."

Awakening to Human Need

By H. A. FAST

PEOPLE hemmed in by public pressure or persecution over a period of years almost inevitably develop ingrown tendencies. Their interests, sympathies, and cerns turn inward and concentrate on caring for their n group. They tend to ignore people outside their n circle because they are afraid their help may be uncome or even resented.

Something like this happened to our Mennonite forers. For centuries they were a minority group, misderstood and maligned, often under public pressure, en hemmed in and despised and sometimes persecuted martyred because of their Christian conviction and r position in regard to participation in war and mili- training. Pushed in upon themselves as they were s not surprising that interest in missions and in welfare services was a little late in developing. The concern of Christian love was present among them, but it confined itself largely to ministering to their own circles. Mutual aid services within the brotherhood abounded. Barn raisings, helping neighbors in sickness or distress, caring for their poor, providing land for new families are examples of this spirit at work in the brotherhood. These services were largely unorganized and spontaneous but deeply related to their Christian faith and way of life. The need for a colonization committee was seriously discussed in the 1893 session of the Conference, but no action was taken. They were concerned about finding settlement opportunities for their young people and in gathering them into communities so that Mennonite churches and church life were possible.

The Birth of Missions

With the development of missionary services there came a larger orientation to human suffering and need. Conference church papers with a growing circulation and with their reports about missions and world needs near and far and a church leadership trained in Mennonite schools all combined to awaken in the congregations a larger and keener awareness of human suffering and a finer sensitivity to need beyond their own borders.

The missionary efforts really served to demonstrate how impossible it is to preach the Gospel of God's saving love and then leave men to live in poverty and in degrading circumstances. Our earliest mission efforts among the American Indians therefore inevitably concerned themselves with sickness, misery, and poverty so prevalent among the Indians and how to help them to a better livelihood by teaching them some elementary things about farming and the raising of crops and livestock.

Later when the work in India started, our missionaries were deeply moved by the pathetic plight of the many lepers, and they reached out a helping hand in the name of Christ. This service to the pitiable victims of disease and uncleanness was not something apart from the Gospel. It was in truth the Gospel as Jesus himself had incarnated it. This ministry to human need helped to make convincing their witness to the love of God in Christ Jesus.

The sorrow of the bereaved, the sad plight of orphans, the suffering of the sick, the need of the aged had always touched with deep sympathy and with expressions of helpfulness the members of the churches. As the Conference grew in numbers, the churches became aware how large was the task of caring for their own people in distress and how much the churches needed one another in meeting these multiplying needs within their own number and how much more they could accomplish by co-operation and by pooling their resources.

J. S. Krehbiel built the second Cantonment School in Okla., in 1893.

As a result orphan societies, homes for the aged, and general hospitals for the care of the sick came into being. The Frederick, Pennsylvania, Home for the Aged was established in 1896. Mennonite general hospitals were organized in the early years of the 1900s. Some of the earliest were Bethesda Hospital, Goessel, Kansas, established in 1899; Bethel Deaconess Hospital, Newton, Kansas, 1908; Mennonite Deaconess Home and Hospital, Beatrice, Nebraska, 1911; and Mennonite Hospital, Bloomington, Illinois, 1919. Now there are a dozen or more general hospitals in the United States and Canada in which General Conference churches are actively involved, often in co-operation with other Mennonite groups, and in addition about half a dozen mental hospitals. Homes for the aged number at least a dozen and a half.

The Beginning of Relief Work

Probably nothing in the early history of our Conference so sharply stabbed awake latent Christian sympathies as the tragic stories of desperate famine and starvation in India during the years 1897 and following. The files of Conference leaders are full of letters voicing deep distress over this tragic human need and seeking ways to help alleviate the suffering.

Not having any direct connections with India, our Conference channeled its early relief contributions through the Home and Foreign Relief Commission, a quasi inter-Mennonite relief commission set up for India relief. General Conference representatives on this Commission were S. F. Sprunger, Berne, Indiana, and J. A. Sprunger of Chicago. An April 12, 1897, letter by G. L. Bender, treasurer, addressed to David Goerz acknowledges receipt of $8,000, a sizable sum for those days.

Clearest evidence, however, of an awakened sensitivity to human suffering is a resolution passed by the 1898 session of Conference, "that the General Conference appoint a relief committee of six which is to receive gifts for the support of all welfare causes and which is to disburse them according to the wishes of the donors. Undesignated gifts are to be disbursed according to their own good judgment." The members elected were: H. Landis, P. P. Steiner, David Goerz (secretary), G. Wiebe, H. H. Regier, and Christian Krehbiel (chairman).

An appeal to the churches by this Committee in December 1899 brought a liberal contribution both in cash and in corn. A shipload of 8,000 bushels of corn reached Bombay June 20, 1900. David Goerz, secretary of the Emergency Relief Commission, was asked to accompany this shipment and supervise its distribution. P. A. Penner, who came to India the following October, supervised relief efforts after David Goerz left.

An interesting side light on this India relief effort is a 2 conference resolution urging that the Emergency ief Committee and the Board of Foreign Missions k in close co-operation in order to determine how ef work can best serve the total purposes of missions. This broadened sensitivity to human suffering having e been thoroughly aroused apparently never died. at crises brought a new glow to the concern for peo- near and far, hurt by the experiences of life. The ergency Relief Committee was set up to function in nergencies." The record shows it was alert to dis- er emergency needs, but it was somewhat slow to act. t having a budget or an emergency fund, it had to t for Committee approval of proposed aid and for tributions from the churches in response to appeals. This alertness of the Relief Committee and the gen- us response of the churches can be seen from a few ples of service from the intervening years before rld War I.

The 1905 report of the Emergency Relief Committee contributions to sufferers from flood disasters in a -Mennonite Kansas community and again to tornado ster victims in Snyder, Oklahoma. Other funds were to Armenia in response to urgent calls for help.

n 1906 some $838 was sent through the Red Cross response to some disaster that struck Japan. Two dred and ninety-seven dollars went to San Francisco hquake victims. But the largest sum, $5,792, was warded through the *Christian Herald* to famine suf- rs in China.

h 1907 $6,583 was sent to famine relief in Russia the Russian Mennonite Relief Committee. Other ds went to India for administration by our mission- s. The following years in addition to continuing line relief in China, Siberia, and other parts of Russia, ds were sent to Italy, Turkey, Armenia, the Syrian anage in Jerusalem directed by Ludwig Schneller, d sufferers in Nebraska, Ohio, and Indiana and to dy persons in home and foreign mission fields.

Helping Brethren in Russia

The war years, 1914-1917, with their fury of destruction left behind an overwhelming tragedy of suffering and need. The response of our churches during the war years was somewhat curtailed because of war restrictions, but contributions totaling $17,647 were disbursed: almost $5,000 to the American Red Cross, $4,000 to the German Red Cross, and other sums to war sufferers in Russia, Siberia, Austria, Syria, Armenia, Jerusalem and refugees in Switzerland.

The year 1920 confronted the Mennonite brotherhood with a tragedy of staggering proportions. Hopeless hunger and starvation was afflicting Russia, threatening vast populations including the large Mennonite settlements. A delegation from Russia (A. A. Friesen, B. H. Unruh, C. H. Warkentin, Johann J. Esau) had come to America pleading for help. Relief was so urgent and the need so staggering that a joint meeting of representatives of relief agencies of various Mennonite bodies formed a Central Committee which would seek to pool the resources and co-ordinate and unify the efforts of our North American brotherhood in a far-reaching attempt to bring food to the hungry and starving. This meeting in Elkhart, Indiana, on July 27, 1920, marked the beginning of the work of the Mennonite Central Committee. General Conference representatives, notably Maxwell Kratz (vice-chairman) and H. H. Regier, were very active in promoting this co-ordination of Mennonite relief efforts.

The importance of this venture in inter-Mennonite co-operation in alleviating human suffering can hardly be overemphasized. Not only did this new organization, the Mennonite Central Committee, mobilize the resources of the North American brotherhood for the overwhelming need of this particular occasion, but it opened the door for a continuing ministry of love and relief which over the years reached countless thousands, not to say millions, in far corners of the earth. At the same time it served to keep the co-operating Mennonite groups alert and

the Revolution, Mennonite women were compelled to pull den plows, because their horses had been taken away from . The American Fordson sent to them by American Mennonite Relief was a Godsend.

responsive to a wide variety of human need. It proved to be an ever-ready and effective channel for their outreach of Christian compassion. Its ministry enlisted generous contributions of money and gifts-in-kind and challenged many hundreds to offer personal service "in the name of Christ" for longer or shorter periods of time.

At the 1920 session of Conference, the Relief Committee reported total contributions of $92,426. Larger disbursements went to war sufferers in Europe $44,356; Syria, Armenia and India $17,176; Red Cross $3,819. These relief contributions were channeled through the American, the Swiss, and the Russian Red Cross, the Friends Service Committee, the YMCA, and other relief agencies. The Conference by motion guaranteed $5,000 per month for Russian famine relief. It also endorsed participation in "reconstruction work" using drafted young men to rebuild in Europe what war had destroyed. In a sense this was the forerunner of the present Pax housing project.

The next triennium, 1920 to 1923, the churches, now truly aroused to the desperate character of the tragedy in Russia really rose to the staggering need. A study of the situation revealed the destitute in Russia needed not only food and clothing but also the means of getting started again because animals to till the soil had been killed for food. In response to this need, Mennonites in North America sent fifty Fordson tractors (fifteen from General Conference churches) accompanied by Mennonite boys (Dan Schroeder one of them) to instruct people how to use the machinery and to plant crops. A similar awareness of need had in 1921 inspired a shipment of 750 cows accompanied by twenty-seven men to Germany to help replenish depleted livestock.

Realizing that the famine sufferers in Russia also needed urgently spiritual comforts, the Conference sent C. E. Krehbiel and later P. H. Unruh to be the bond of Christian love that knit us to them and to express it by gifts that provided food and clothing for the body and by a service which would bring health, strength, and inner renewal for the hurt of the soul.

The situation in Russia became politically and economically so desperate that thousands of Mennonites and non-Mennonites clamored for a chance to migrate. The Canadian Board of Colonization under the leadership of David Toews with energetic support from the Mennonites in the United States helped some 21,000 immigrants to find a new home in Canada. This refugee resettlement was only the first of several waves of migration, notably that of 1929 to 1930 and 1947 to 1953 which brought thousands to South America (Paraguay, Brazil, Uruguay, and Argentina) and thousands to Canada. In all these succeeding efforts, General Conference leaders and churches showed a keen and growing awareness of human need and a generous spirit of sharing.

The resettlement of large numbers of refugees sharpened and made compelling the insight that these people needed not so much charity as understanding assistance which would safeguard their self-respect, build the spirit of brotherhood, and keep alive a vivid sense of mission. This insight and concern, therefore, deeply influenced the type of service our Conference churches extended to refugee settlers in the years following.

Over a period of years this took the form of loans with very liberal repayment provisions; modest subsidies to schools, teachers, and churches, to itinerant ministers and to mission projects in cities; commissioner visits in response to special needs and requests; subsidizing a South American Mennonite periodical, *Bibel und Pflug;* subsidizing the Mennonite Biblical Seminary in Montevideo. In all of these projects great care was taken not to dampen local initiative and responsibility but rather to strengthen the hands of the new settlers and encourage them to develop their own leadership and institutions and to find strength in service.

After World War II

World War II, 1939-1945, brought unparalleled suffering all over the world, unparalleled in intensity, violence, and brutality, and unparalleled in extent. It confronted the Mennonite brotherhood with areas of human need they had never really faced before with such piercing reality and such urgency.

Mechanized warfare, incendiary and obliteration bombing, gas chambers, brain washings, and other fiendish weapons left the world a physical and moral shambles, whole cities a frightful horror of destruction, misery, suffering, and hunger. The drafting of thousands of young men from United States and Canadian homes and scattering them in places we probably would never have gone as churches on our own initiative brought us abruptly into areas of need we had never confronted. Thousands of drafted conscientious objectors to military training and war who felt that as Christians they could have no part in this method of hate, violence, and destruction nevertheless felt constrained to do all they could to heal the wounds of war and to give positive expression and witness to Christian love. They clamored for opportunities to serve in areas of tension, need, and neglect. Priceless and widely varied opportunities presented themselves.

Out of this contact with the raw side of human life, there grew a deep concern for better care for the mentally ill, a rediscovery of how much we can do one for another, a profound sympathy for refugees, and a desire to rehabilitate them and help them to a new home, a livelihood, good health, and to active church life and to good schools. The stark tragedy of war brought also a new realization how desperately urgent is the proclamation of the gospel of reconciliation and peace, peace with God and with man, in a world that threatens to destroy itself.

Out of concerns like these there grew in the course of years a far-reaching service to the mentally ill. A large host of young people responded to the challenge of

need giving themselves for longer or shorter periods service in mental hospitals in the name of Christ.

Other service programs such as the following develd from these concerns.

(1) A greatly expanded and diversified program of tual aid assisting people within the brotherhood to a ne and livelihood. This service extended its helping d even into mission fields.

(2) A wide range of rehabilitation projects for the efit of war victims and poverty-stricken peoples in ny countries of the world. Refugee housing in Gerny and Austria; village and agriculture improvement jects in Greece, Near East, Indonesia, Far East, and xico; roadbuilding projects in Paraguay; and health vices in many places are samples of this service.

(3) Pax, 1-W, and Voluntary Service projects in ny lands. These services offered to drafted young men l other concerned young people priceless opportunities enter areas of real need and to bring there a witness Christian love.

(4) A large and varied service of gifts-in-kind which s alert to actual needs in the field and which knew v to appeal to a generous spirit of sharing in the ne churches. What home in Mennonite circles has not tributed something to one or more of the following jects: food and clothing centers, Christmas parcels, canning program, donations of wheat and flour (ROP), the heifer program, CARE packages, Bibles l the like?

t should be emphasized that services like these were erally sponsored co-operatively by Mennonite groups ough the Mennonite Central Committee. But the heral Conference carried its full share of responsibility financial support and personnel as well as in discovng needs and in keeping our Mennonite brotherhood sitive and responsive to these needs.

Out of the discovered need for a vital Christian peace ness grew peace conferences, peace pamphlets, peace sions to Europe and the Far East, renewed peace lies and peace education efforts, reaffirmations of our istian peace position, and larger works on peace jects.

t is painful to pass over these last years of awakening human need with mere summarizing statements be- se they were years of spiritual growth. The breadth our sympathy and concern was beginning to include ple irrespective of race, nation, language or creed. were beginning to sense how relevant and indissable was the gospel of Jesus Christ and his love to total need of man. We were beginning to discover here head and heart, lips and hand, muscle and hey must work hand in hand if the Christian witness o be convincing and is to encompass the totality of man's life. The ministry of Christian love cannot be relegated to "emergencies." Want, anguish, disaster, suffering, and pain are always with us appealing to Christian compassion, and we must never be deaf or calloused to the cry of human need. For this reason our Conference has ceased to think of this ministry as "emergency" service. It has become in our thought as well as our budget an inseparable part of our Christian calling.

How far-flung and varied this ministry of love has now become, a look at the report of the Board of Christian Service will clearly reveal. God who sensitized our hearts and alerted our minds to a keen awareness of human need has also led us to see how varied are the troubles that beset man and he has challenged us to serve him "in the name of Christ."

God helped us to discover the man by the wayside bruised and bleeding, and he awakened in us compassion so that we stopped on our journey to see what had happened to him never asking whether he was Jew or Gentile, sinner or saint. Under the prompting of God's Holy Spirit, we were moved to give emergency aid and medical care. Then love constrained us to stay by him long enough to help put him back on his feet.

But strangely enough God would not let us forget the "robbers" whose violence and greed had caused all this trouble and pain. Could we do something about them and their spirit of ruthlessness and greed? Would the manifestation of unwearied, outgoing, God-inspired good will serve to transform them and other men of ill will into men of good will? Would that help to draw them near to God, to yield themselves to the doing of his will, to overcome their hostility toward others and redeem them to a life of peace and good will? A growing sensitivity to social problems like these and an increasing sense of social responsibility led to the creation of a committee on social concerns to give special thought to our Christian witness in these areas.

Experience again and again drove home to us how inseparably the ministry of the Word and the ministry of heart and hand were linked together. There have been many occasions in Conference history when the need required co-operation between various Boards. These occasions have multiplied and today the Conference Boards (Missions, Education and Publication, Business Administration, and Christian Service) find it necessary to cooperate in many areas of service because the total task of the Conference requires it.

It is a thrilling story, this awakening to human need. I wish I knew how to tell it so as to thrill every person present, not encouraging any spirit of self-congratulation but inspiring profound gratitude that God has worked among us and has opened amazing doors of opportunity to us. Hitherto the Lord has indeed guided us and helped us. Where will he lead next? Will we be ready to follow?

Centennial Conference Sermon

Builders for Eternity

By ERLAND WALTNER

ON the base of the Menno Simons Monument on the outskirts of Witmarsum in Friesland there is inscribed the oft-quoted Scripture motto of Menno Simons from 1 Cor. 3:11, "For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ." This motto of Menno, which he used in every book he wrote, has become a significant and decisive word in the history of our General Conference Mennonite Church. It appears in the minutes of some of the earliest sessions of the General Conference where the founding fathers made explicit reference to our *Mennonitische Grundlehre, von Menno gegründet auf das Evangelium, nach I Kor. 3:11.* It appeared right under the masthead of the first issue of *The Mennonite* published in Philadelphia back in October, 1885. It had already appeared on the masthead of *Der Christlicher Bundesbote* since 1883. It was also written firmly into the first constitution of the General Conference adopted in the Alexanderwohl Church in Kansas in 1896 where the brethren wrote, "The General Conference of the Mennonites of North America recognizes and confesses the sacred Scriptures of the Old and the New Testaments as the Word of God, the only trustworthy guide for faith and life, For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ."

For this historic occasion as we gather for our Centennial sessions of the General Conference with fraternal delegates and friends from other Mennonite groups and from abroad, this Word of God stands out for us above all others. This theme, prayerfully chosen by our program committee, "Our Foundation . . . Jesus Christ," speaks to this moment. This is God's Word for us as those who build, not for a day, not for a year, not even for a century. This is the Word of God to us as builders for eternity.

It is significant that this word in 1 Cor. 3:11 lies in a context of concern for the unity of the church. There was dissension at Corinth. Paul is concerned for the wholeness and unity of the fellowship and thus he speaks patiently but pointedly to this urgent need. To this end he introduces this graphic and meaningful figure of building on the one true foundation, not for time but for eternity.

It was a similar deep concern for scattered and divided Mennonite congregations that moved our Conference founders to convene at West Point, Iowa, back in 1860. They sought to establish a fellowship which would bring together these separate congregations into a functioning whole. Their slogan from the beginning was "unity in essentials, liberty in nonessentials, and charity in all things." Their dream may now seem to us naive. Their hopes have not been fully realized even after a century. But the foundation which they laid, in as far as it centers in 1 Corinthians 3:11, is firmly established and needs no revision even after one hundred years.

As we meet in this Centennial Conference session, we are still concerned about unity and still concerned about building for eternity. It is clear that not all that is called church building is building for eternity. There is such a thing as motion without meaning, effort without effect, and much ado which comes to nothing. Sometimes the efforts of the church result in something which is more like a banana leaf shack than a stone cathedral. A centennial is an occasion to thank God for his grace toward us through a century. But it is also a time to take inventory, to get our bearings, to ask ourselves where we are going and whether we are actually on the way there. This is a time to remember the past with gratitude but it is also a time to evaluate the present with honesty and to chart the future with vision and hope.

Not everything which has been undertaken in our conference history has endured even the ravages of time, to say nothing of the eternal judgment of God. It has not stood the test of the decades; much less would it stand the test of the divine fire. It is important then that we ask ourselves "When are we indeed building for eternity?" This is the question of the hour and our passage in its context gives us at least three clear answers.

Christ—The Foundation

We are builders for eternity only when we build on the true foundation, Jesus Christ. Let no one for a moment consider this a time-worn pious platitude. This, for the Apostle Paul and for us, represents an ultimate concern.

To say that our foundation is Jesus Christ is to deny the adequacy of other foundations on which many men around us are building. When Jesus Christ is our final foundation, we do not build on mere personal experience and individual opinions for we know that these are too limited when one is building for eternity. We do not build on a human tradition alone, even the tradition of the church, for this, too, is not always trustworthy and is often too confining. We do not build simply on the prevailing culture of our time for this also is too changeable and too superficial. We do not even build finally on

ilosophy or science nor on any one particular philoso-
y or particular science, illuminating and helpful as all
these may be to us. Neither a passing pragmatism nor
popular existentialism, nor an undue reliance on the
iological or the psychological sciences will suffice to
e us that bedrock foundation that we need to build
eternity. All of these may help us to understand Jesus
rist and to understand ourselves and our world, but
y are not our ultimate foundation or authority.

We do not even build ultimately on some theological
tem, however sincerely and consistently it may be
nstructed, whether it be theological liberalism, or funda-
ntalism, or neo-orthodoxy, or neo-liberalism. We build
Jesus Christ and on him above as the ultimate solid
ndation of the church, the only final authority for
ristian faith and life.

Who then is this Jesus Christ and how do we know
m? With Paul we would surely answer that this
rist is the Christ of the Scriptures, not a Christ who
he projection of our imagination. It is Jesus Christ of
zareth, the Christ of history, not of mythology. As
er says, "We have not followed cunningly devised
les." It is the Christ of the whole Bible, foretold in
Old Testament, fulfilled in the New. It is the Christ
o is himself eternal, the virgin-born incarnate Son of
d, fully human, fully divine, tempted in all points
e as we are and yet without sin, crucified for our sins
d raised for our justification, and coming again with
wer and great glory.

It is no accident that as men wrestled with the prob-
ns of the unity of the church even in our own genera-
n they have come back again to the question of Chris-
ogy. What do you make of Jesus Christ? is still the
cial question. It is still true that only as we are one
our faith in him are we one in true Christian fellow-
p. Any building of fellowship which is not based on
person of Jesus Christ and which does not keep him
the center or give him the pre-eminence will not long
dure as a Christian fellowship. To build for eternity
build on him who is eternal.

What does this mean for our conference fellowship?
elieve that it means that in our conference fellowship,
which we have sometimes been inclined to evade and
dge theological issues either because we have found
m difficult or divisive, we will need again to take a
d hard look at what we actually believe. As I study
history of our Conference, I get the impression that
our famous slogan, "unity in essentials, liberty in non-
entials, and charity in all things," we have sometimes
the main emphasis on the second phrase. We have
ssed liberty and identified more and more non-essen-
s. This, in some cases, has led to an individualism
ong our church members which all but destroys the
al fellowships and an autonomy of local congrega-
ns which sometimes has made conference action mean-
less. It is illustrated in the difficulty which one has in answering the question, just what do General Conference Mennonites really believe concerning this or that issue?

Without sacrificing the values of the individual Christian's freedom and congregational autonomy and without forgetting that the people of our conference come from many different backgrounds, perhaps it is time to put new emphasis upon the first phrase, "unity in essentials," and keep on lifting up the last one, "charity in all things." We must ask again, What are the essentials? and Are we one in them? In this critical period of world history when the corrosive and disintegrating influences of our secular society are making strong inroads into our church life, when our closed rural communities are giving way to a relentless urbanization, when our entire fellowship feels itself caught in the ebb and flow of the complex cultural, political, and economic situations of our society, only a clear-cut and strong unified dedication to Jesus Christ as Saviour and Lord of our lives and as foundation and head of the church can assure us that we are still building for eternity.

Visiting the Cathedral of Amiens, Heinrich Heine was asked by a friend, "Why do we no longer build such cathedrals?" Heine replied, "My dear friend, men in those days had convictions (*Überzeugungen*), we moderns have opinions (*Meinungen*) and it requires more than an opinion to build a Gothic cathedral." It is to us that Jesus says, "Therefore, whosoever heareth these sayings of mine and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock. And the rains descended and the floods came and the winds blew and it beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock."

Fire-Tested Building Materials

Again we are builders for eternity only when we build with durable materials which cannot be destroyed.

In 1 Cor. 3:12-15, Paul indicates that one must reckon not only with the possibility of building on a wrong foundation but also with the possibility of building on the right foundation with the wrong materials. The result of such building, according to Paul, is that the building is destroyed though the builder himself may be saved. In salvation by grace there is such a thing as the salvation of the worker and the destruction of his work.

Here we must not press too far Paul's figure of the building. Vincent observes that "gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, and stubble," are not tended to represent specific forms of truth and error. Normally one does not literally build with gold or silver, not with hay or stubble. Paul is seeking to make a point by context. The materials which Paul mentions vary widely in value and durability. As is easily observed, they stand generally in an order of decreasing value and increasing flammability.

The materials that endure are those that will stand the test of fire. As Schlatter tersely puts it, *Der Bau aber muss ins Feuer.* (The building must go through the fire.) All that we do stands under the judgment of God, both in time and in eternity.

At this crucial Centennial Conference session, we do well to ask ourselves not only whether we are still building on the true foundation but also whether we are building with the materials that will stand the test of divine judgment. Not all that we have called missions or evangelism or Christian education or Christian service stands the test of time. Not all that we have called character building or church building or conference building has been building for eternity. In the one-hundred-year-history of our Conference, there are not lacking illustrations of building which did not endure. The foundation may have been right. The workmen may have been sincere, but the building did not stand. Was it because the material was not good?

Today we do not sit in judgment on those who have built before us. Our human perspectives are too restricted by ignorance and too distorted by our prejudice to qualify us to be judges. But Christian workers of yesterday, today and tomorrow stand under one judge, even God, and before him all our work is ultimately tried. At the same time we want to learn also from the mistakes of the past and guard zealously against perpetuating error. John Hunt in *The Conquest of Everest* says that one factor in the success of their expedition was the fact that they had studied carefully the failures of all who but tried to scale Mt. Everest before them and a determination not to repeat their mistakes. In conference work we can do no less.

In the presence of the divine fire it becomes clear that nothing which is done in the spirit of resentment or rivalry can long endure. Nothing which is done for self-aggrandizement and vainglory, even for the aggrandizement of a particular group as over against others, can withstand the white heat of the divine judgment. Nothing done simply in the strength of man, without the divine initiative or without the creative working of God's Holy Spirit, will or can abide. What we do in the work of the Kingdom out of low motives, or by sinful methods, or for unworthy ends, will sooner or later crumble and fail. Only that which God does in us in Holy love, that which he does through us by his Holy Spirit, that which he initiates and completes in his sovereign will, that which is done in his name, in more than name, that will endure.

From this Word of God comes an urgent call to every conference board and institution and to every congregation as well as to every individual in these congregations to ask whether we are building with the best possible materials. We need to ask this question in the grim realism of possible judgment in our own time. What of that which we are building as a conference and as churches in this time of material prosperity would even survive the fires of another economic depression? What of that which we are doing would actually survive the fires of an atomic war? What will remain in a space age? What would stand up ultimately in the presence of Jesus Christ coming, reigning, judging?

These questions we must ask ourselves in all seriousness at the threshold of a new century. It behooves us to ask not only on what we build but also with what we build. Where we find that we build with inferior materials, let us repent and begin to build with materials which endure. Even from a crassly utilitarian point of view, a small denomination like ours simply cannot afford to do slip-shod building with inadequate materials and still survive. Let each man then take heed how he builds on the true foundation.

The Divine Design

Finally, we are builders for eternity only when we build according to the divine design. In verses 16 and 17 of our passage we read, "Know ye not that ye are the temple of God and that the spirit of God dwelleth in you? If any man defile the temple of God him shall God destroy: for the temple of God is holy which temple ye are." In these verses the Apostle Paul declares the character of the building which is under construction. The church is the temple of the living God. It is God's building because it belongs to him. It is a spiritual building which is made up of God's people, the temple which consists of the living stones who are built upon the living stone, even Jesus Christ, as we read in 1 Peter 2:4. The church, we have said, is where Christ is living and reigning in the midst of his gathered people.

This has two most significant implications. First of all, it is a call to the people of God to be a Holy people. This involves not only our inward relationship to God in which we recognize ourselves to belong to him but also the outward fashion of our lives. Holiness of life is much more than nonconformity, but there is no Christian holiness without nonconformity to the world. While the concern for the purity of the church bristles with a multitude of practical difficulties, it is, nevertheless, an inescapable concern of the Apostle Paul. The church is God's community of grace and discipleship, the fellowship of "sinners saved by grace," but it is also the community of "the saints striving after holiness." The believers' church must be a fellowship of discipline.

A second major implication of this passage is that to destroy the church is actually a most serious offense against the living God who indwells his church. The word defile here really means destroy. Paul here envisions a third great peril in the building of the church. Not only is it possible to build on the wrong foundation or to build with wrong materials, but it is possible also to fail in building according to the divine design and thus to become a destroyer of the church rather than a builder of it. This may be done in various ways, both consciously and unconsciously. A. T. Robertson, in commenting on this passage, says, "It is a gross sin to be a church wrecker. There are actually a few preachers, he said (and he might as well have added laymen), who leave behind them ruin like a tornado." Paul warns earnestly saying, in effect, that God will also wreck the church wrecker.

In these Centennial sessions we then must ask ourves a third crucial question. Are we building accordto the divine plan? Are we building churches that really churches of the living Christ and not merely igious social clubs? Are we building a conference lowship which is actually an instrument through which Holy Spirit of God can accomplish his purposes, l not merely a smoothly-running, ecclesiastical mane? Are we something more than an aggregation of genial conference delegates and visitors, an assembly so many thousand persons who came to see things at ffton in August, 1959? Are we here and now assemd in this conference session to be the church to which d can speak and through which he may speak to the ger church and to the world?

As we face these questions, let us not be blinded by spirit of the cynics who see but little accomplished ough our Conference through the past century. Anye who will take the trouble to read our conference tory and the reports and minutes of the conference sions, anyone who will visit our churches and our ference institutions and our mission fields and service posts, will know that God has already accomplished ighty work through us. We may say humbly but with fidence that the church of Jesus Christ is being built. Let no one be so blinded by our failings that he cannot see the glory of God's grace and working in our Conference.

On the other hand, let us not be blinded in our own enthusiasm over our accomplishments that we fail to see that God is calling us to higher and greater things than we yet have attained. We have talked much about missions and evangelism, but the growth of the church is still not keeping pace with the growth of world population. We have been active in education and publication, but communism is still outstripping the church in the use of purinted page. We have been doing well in our stewardship and splendidly in our Christian service program and our peace witness, but the threat of a devastating nuclear war is still imminent.

The days are evil. The time may be short. But we are builders for eternity. These Conference days are moments of great opportunity. We are met in a workshop of time to be builders for eternity.

We have the foundation.
We have the materials.
We have a design.
We have tools.
We have workmen.

Come then and let us build.

THE LORDSHIP OF CHRIST

(Continued from page 149)

ppening so as not to be misled. We must be studied ough that we can give an answer to the hope that is us. We need to challenge the theologies of our day h a gospel that frankly accepts the facts of the biblical elation without seeking to escape their implications the Christian life.

Through all of this confusion we need hear again the rds of Peter—"Let all the house of Israel therefore ow assuredly that God has made him both Lord and rist, this Jesus whom you crucified" (Acts 2:36).

Christ—Lord Over Church and World

To the early believers, the Lordship of Christ had aspects. First of all was Christ's relationship to the rch, to the body of believers. To the believers, Christ's dship spelled obedience. The fact that Jesus had been de Lord and Christ meant that he was the only one thy of ultimate loyalty. Strangely enough, the dises of the Acts seldom cite the moral teachings of us. But again and again they testify of obedience. eir loyalty is to a person, to God who revealed him in Christ. "We must obey God," they say (Acts 9). Or again, when Peter defends his ministry to the ntile centurion, he does not cite moral rules or hropological evidence. God acted and Peter obeyed—ho was I that I could withstand God?" (Acts 11:17)

Second, the fact that Jesus had been made Lord also gave the believers an understanding of history, an ultimate hope, confidence in the face of severest opposition. They were a household of faith with faith in the head of the house. In the resurrection of Jesus, they already saw the final victory over all the forces of history. Though governors, kings, and even high priests might rage and lord it for a while, their doom was already spelled by the Resurrection. Though Herod, to curry the favor of the Jews, might kill James with the sword and commit Peter to four squads of soldiers, his defeat was sure, because the victory belonged to Christ!

> On an appointed day Herod put on his royal robes, took his seat upon the throne, and made an oration to them. And the people shouted, 'The voice of a god, and not of man!' Immediately an angel of the Lord smote him, because he did not give God the glory; and he was eaten by worms and died (Acts 12:21-23).

But their confidence in the victory of Christ did not mean that they could withdraw in complacence, but rather that they obey in faith—without substituting their own aims and devices for the revealed will of God.

Oscar Cullmann has pointed out how these two aspects —Christ's Lordship over his church and over the kingdom of this world—are closely related in the New Testament, especially in the writings of Paul.[1] Nowhere is

this seen more clearly than in the letter to the Ephesians.

> . . . that you may know . . . what is the immeasurable greatness of his power in us who believe, according to the working of his great might which he accomplished in Christ when he raised him from the dead and made him sit at his right hand in the heavenly places, far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and above every name that is named, not only in this age but also in that which is to come; and he has put all things under his feet and has made him the head over all things for the church, which is his body, the fulness of him who fills all in all (Ephesians 1:18-23).

How desperately such a faith is needed today!

Christ—Lord Over Material Possessions

To the early Christians, Christ's Lordship meant that he was Lord over their material possessions and economic life. All that they had owned belonged to him. "And all who believed were together and had all things in common; and they sold their possessions and goods and distributed them to all, as any had need" (Acts 2:44, 45). In fact, they no longer thought of material possessions as something they owned—as something to which they as individuals had sole right! ". . . no one said that any of the things which he possessed was his own . . ." (Acts 4:32). They did not even claim to have given ten per cent or fifty per cent or ninety per cent of that which rightly belonged to themselves. This was a case of mistaken ownership. The disciples suddenly discovered that they did not hold valid titles. God's name was on the title!

There were no needy persons among them. Distinctions of wealth were erased. There was abundance for sharing with those in need. The believers of Antioch engaged in the first Christian relief mission when they sent supplies to famine-struck Judea.

Now it may be that the particular form of economic life is not most important, and it may be that the communal life was soon found unworkable by the early church. But we desperately need the clear realization that the material goods of this earth belong to Christ, and are subject to his Lordship exercised through the church.

How can we possibly justify the gross inequalities of wealth that still exist in the world today—both among ourselves in the church and among the nations of the world? Accustomed to living with three meals a day, with loaded refrigerators and deep freezes, with a convenient account at the local grocer, and bins of surpluses along our roadsides, we just cannot realize what life is like for the billions of hungry people of this world, what it must be like when a child is weak and hungry and parents must answer that there is no meat or bread.

Yet we are told that half the people of the world have not enough to eat. One author recently put it this way:

> Visualize a line starting from your front door, made up of the hungry of the world—many ragged and disease-ravaged, with pinched faces. The line goes on out of sight over continent and ocean, around the world—25,000 miles—and continues to your front door. On and on it stretches, circling the globe not twice nor five times, but twenty-five, and there is no one in the line but hungry, suffering humanity.[2]

It is convenient that the line does not run by our front doors, down the main street of Bluffton, then through Newton and Reedley, and on around through Souderton. For then our luxurious meals would hardly be enjoyable—we would have to draw the shades when we ate our steak dinners. For the sunken eyes of those grown old too soon would pierce into our dining rooms, and starving children would ravage through our garbage cans. Our finned cars and TV antennas would suddenly seem shoddy and profane!

One of our relief workers tells the story of a man of Hiroshima who came through the bombing unhurt. Immediately after the explosion, he went about among the ruins giving what help he could to the burned and mangled and dying. As he came across one after another relative and neighbor, suffering or dead, he could find only these words to utter, "Forgive me for being alive." From his experiences in Hong Kong, the relief worker continues, "As one moves among the lean-to huts, the roof-top shelters, the hall-way bed spaces, the pavement shacks, and along the miles of resettlement house balconies, one says, 'Forgive me for having so much.'"[3]

The needs are overwhelming, and what we could give is but a drop in the bucket. But is it not time for us as disciples of him who had no place to lay his head to examine again our economic life to see if it has really been yielded to our Lord? Within the church we must adjust our economic practices to his will, and not to the standards of a pagan and sensate society. Does not our belief in separation from the world mean anything in this realm? Let us listen seriously to those voices among us that are calling for a re-examination.

Having changed our own materialistic practices, we would again be in a position to cry out against the inequalities of our day, to be a clear witness of a new way of life. We will need to employ organizational and even governmental means to meet these needs. We use the modern methods of communication and trade in our own economic life, and we must also use these for others. This does not mean that we will seek to satisfy man's total needs with material goods. The problem is not only that suffering mankind stands in need of bread and shelter, but that it is wrong for the Christian to have so much when his brother stands in such desperate need. And in the act of sharing there is the possibility of a deeper reconciliation. Selling wheat on the market may be a material act. But sharing a loaf of bread with a hungry neighbor is a spiritual act.

rist—Lord Over the Acceptability of All Men

To the early Christians, Christ's Lordship meant that was Lord over the acceptance of members into the rch. Jesus had called all men to repentance. And when y came sincerely repenting, no difference of culture, or, or race dared stand in the way. John tells us in gospel that the Jews had no dealings with the Samar-ns. They were a despised people, having entered un-n relations with the Gentiles. But when the disciples e dispersed from Jerusalem, Philip went to a city of haria preaching the word. When the multitudes be-ed, Peter and John came down from Jerusalem to firm this ministry. Then when the Samaritans re-ed the Holy Spirit, the disciples knew that God had en his divine stamp of approval. They dared not add man-devised restrictions.

Again, when Philip was called to go down the Gaza d and instructed to join the man in the chariot, he did balk because the man was black. He went up and sat h him, and together they studied the Scriptures. ether the Ethiopian was already a proselyte Jew, we not know. Perhaps he was, for it seemed that the test was yet to come. What about the uncircumcised ntiles who in no way kept the law of the fathers? d the test came squarely to Peter when he was called breach to the Gentile centurion.

t is thrilling that the breakthrough came through er and not solely through Paul. You might have ex-ted it of Paul, with all his education, a Roman citizen, an of travel and much experience. But Peter was a ple Jewish fisherman who had never mingled with uncircumcised. When he received the vision of the lean animals and was commanded to kill and eat, he ld only reply, "No Lord; for I have never eaten any-g that is common or unclean" (Acts 10:14). But r obeyed and went, and perceived that God shows partiality. And when back in Jerusalem Peter was ed to defend his actions, his answer was simple but —"If then God gave the same gift to them as he e to us when we believed in the Lord Jesus Christ, o was I that I could withstand God?" (Acts 11:17) d acted and Peter obeyed.

Again, this was a venture of faith. It was a violation hat which had been deeply engrained in Jewish cus-s and practices. The circumcision party criticized, like sts and others still criticize today. But the barriers e being broken by the power of the gospel! How perately such a ministry is needed today when the rch seems like one of the last institutions to accept right practices regarding race!

We have failed to realize the seriousness of the evils acial segregation. Our consciences have been too easy. have not hungered and thirsted after righteousness. ial discrimination has had evil effects in all areas of —economically, educationally, legally, socially and chologically. It has had evil effects internationally. The whole world follows minutely what happens in our Little Rocks, Birminghams, Jacksons, and Tallahassees, and our Philadelphias and Chicagos. Two times in one week in the South we met Africans traveling through the States learning about American practices. And too often such visits verify their impression of the United States as a white-supremist colonial power.

Most tragic, however, are the spiritual effects within the church and for evangelism. Man is injured and misled spiritually. Negroes develop a false sense of inferiority—little Negro children expressing a longing to be white, because they sense a difference. When one of our young people, a member of the church, your sister in the faith, entered a service program and went to another part of the country, she could not worship in the local Mennonite church. This could happen in the North as well as in the South. This is not only a sin against the Negro. This is rebellion against God, against the Lord of the church!

Segregation is evil for evangelism. The world no longer knows what kind of a Christ we are offering. Many are reacting against the white man and against his religion, his Christ, all over the world. This is our judgment. Communism and nationalistic religions have taken full advantage. A few blocks from the Woodlawn Church in Chicago stands an Islam Temple, where a man by the name of Mr. Muhammed spends his energies in calling Negroes away from the white man's Christ, at least in part because the Christian church has been so unfaithful to her Lord.

White Christians, on the other hand, have developed a false sense of superiority, barred from the deepest levels of Christian fellowship by prejudice and hypocrisy. A veteran missionary of our church wrote these words: "It would amaze you to know how many of our own people, in our own church, love the Negro in Africa, but not in America." As with the starving peoples, it seems more convenient to have the Negro brother across the oceans. All of this is rooted deep in man's pride and self.

We must, first of all, re-examine ourselves personally, confessing our unchristian attitudes—white and Negro. Before our God, we all stand with unclean hearts. Humbly we must yield ourselves anew to his grace and will. We must adopt thoroughly Christian practices within our congregations and within our church institutions. Again our standard must be the gospel of Christ, and not our pagan society. We must call fellow Christians to re-examine the will of God for the church. She is called to a special role in meeting this crisis. Lawmakers and judges can make men equal before the law and in the courts. But the church must bring men of all races together at the table of her Lord—that men may see this new way, with oneness in him, and recognize that Jesus was sent of God.

In addition, the church must speak out against the

racial injustices prevalent in our country. She is God's spokesman. Through her our sin-sick society must hear again the eternal "thus saith the Lord!" This is not a question about taste or preference, but rather about obedience. There is a warning for us in Peter's testimony —"who was I that I could withstand God?" We must cooperate with others in working for racial justice.

Christ—Lord Over Illness and Death

To the early Christians, Christ's Lordship meant that he was Lord even over illness and death. Here too there was a question about power, about authority. When Peter healed the lame man, he was faced with this accusing question, "By what power or by what name did you do this?" (Acts 4:7) His answer is forthright and clear—"Be it known to you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ . . . this man is standing before you well" (Acts 4:10). In fact, Peter's confession to the lame man himself puts the situation clearly—"I have no silver and gold, but I give you what I have" (Acts 3:8). What Peter had was faith in One who had power to heal.

This theme continues throughout the Acts, to the place where, to modern man, it seems like superstitution: ". . . they even carried out the sick into the streets, and laid them on beds and pallets, that as Peter came by at least his shadow might fall on some of them" (Acts 5:15). Again, such a faith is so desperately needed today. Tremendous strides have been made in medicine for the healing of men's physical bodies. But we face a new crisis in mental illness—in the care of the soul, an area uniquely close to the ministry of the Christian church.

We need to examine further the relation of the Christian gospel, the authority of Christ, to the problems of mental illness and the psychological treatment of the mentally ill. This examination is needed especially in such areas as guilt and confession, healing and faith, and the place of the redeeming fellowship, the church. Any attempt to answer man's deepest emotional and mental needs without God is another form of proud rebellion.

A dramatic example of the problem is the case of Claude Eatherly who fourteen years ago, August 6, 1945, helped drop the atomic bomb on Hiroshima.[4] Though he was but a tragic victim in a dreadful chain, he played his part, and he knows it. Because he knows, his life has become a torment of guilt, fear, and dread of persecution. Eatherly began to drink, to escape his feelings of guilt. He has attempted suicide. He has been in and out of the mental hospital. He stands in need of the forgiving love of God, and not only psychiatric treatment.

It is in Christ and his church that life takes on meaning, that the void of secular existence is filled. The sane society that psychologists are seeking is really the redeemed society. But here too we have fallen so far short. We must truly become again the redeeming fellowship—in all areas of life. We need further study, deeper response, a greater faith.

Christ—Lord Over the Demands of the State

To the early Christians, Christ's Lordship meant that he was Lord even over the demands of the Jewish authorities and the Roman state. When the Jewish authorities charged Peter and John to quit speaking in the name of Jesus, the answer was clear and almost brash—"Whether it is right in the sight of God to listen to you rather than to God, you must judge; for we *cannot* but speak of that which we have seen and heard" (Acts 4:19-20). Though Herod could commit Peter to four quarternions of soldiers, and have him bound with chains, sleeping between two soldiers, with sentries guarding the prison, the decision was in the hands of Christ. When Peter came to himself later, he testified, "Now I am sure that the Lord has sent his angel and rescued me from the hands of Herod" (Acts 12:11).

The issue of war and military service is not faced immediately by the early disciples, but their answer is perfectly clear. Their swords have been left behind with the doubts and fears that were climaxed in Gethsemane! They now understand what Jesus had meant when he said, "My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, my servants would fight" (John 18:36). They do not need to use the pagan sword to defend the Kingdom of God. Historians verify that the early believers did not participate in the militarism of their day.

This, too, was a matter of faith. It was not just a personal claim of preference. The believers had faith that there was a Righteous One who had power even over the Roman empire. Jesus was Lord, not Caesar. It is Christ that stands in judgment over the nations and will bring them into subjection. "The Lord said to my Lord. Sit at my right hand, till I make thy enemies a stool for thy feet" (Acts 2:34, 35). How desperately such a witness is needed today—today, when the "great" nations stand in proud and defiant rebellion against the creator of the universe!

With the unleashing of the atom, man has tapped the basic energies of the universe. Unimaginable new speed and power are in the hands of man, the creature. Ballistic missiles are designed to deliver their deathly loads at approximately the speed of satellites, some 18,000 miles per hour. The H-bombs of today are measured in megatons—each megaton the equivalent of a million tons of TNT—this as compared with the 20 kiloton bomb of Hiroshima, and the 2½ ton "block-buster" bombs of World War II. One such 20 megaton bomb dropped in the heart of a large city would destroy everything within a radius of five miles.

Secular man has become like the persons in Sartre's play, for whom there is *No Exit,* but for whom existence together has become a mutual hell. After the Russians announced the explosion of a thermo-nuclear bomb, Churchill commented, "Safety will (henceforth) be the sturdy child of terror, and survival the twin brother of

ihilation." The balance of power has become a bal- of terror.

Ve are secretly developing new weapons with which can kill with more finesse and in better taste! Last when the Chief Chemical Officer of the US Army fied before Congress, he said this: "By and large chemical and biological warfare do the things that do without destroying buildings, churches, manu- uring sites, things which might be of post-war value." see, we could kill them all, and then move in and ship God in their churches! This is mocking God! s is blasphemy against the Lord of life!

Jo one who has looked deeply into the sufferings of iroshima and Nagasaki, or tried to imagine what a holocaust would be like for children and loved ones, claim Christian love and faith in his heart while ding idly by. It is both a blessing and a curse that cannot imagine more vividly what another war would ike. It is a blessing because the pain of such imagina- would be too great for us humans to bear. It is a e because it leaves us blindly proud of our military ht with those among us who act as if a world war ht yet be fought to our advantage.

n spite of all terrifying facts, one thing should be r. The Christian is not to be motivated primarily by . "For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but power, and of love, and of a sound mind" (2 Tim.). 'And fear not them which kill the body, but are able to kill the soul . . ." (Matthew 10:28). But s did warn us to fear him who is able to destroy soul and body. And this is a devilish business in ch not only bodies but souls are at stake. For one g, it behooves us to fear lest the Christian church so-called Christian America should herself have a in inflicting the scourges of war. What greater be- al could there be? Christians everywhere must be ed to come out from within the violent conflicts of world, to separate themselves from preparation for and atomic destruction.

urthermore, we must warn the peoples of this world he treacherous and deadly course in which they have heir feet. Who will give the warning of God in this ? The word of God comes to us as it did to Ezekiel—

> Son of man, I have made you a watchman for the house of Israel; whenever you hear a word from my mouth, you shall give them warning from me. If I say to the wicked, 'You shall surely die,' and you give him no warning, nor speak to warn the wicked from his wicked way, in order to save his life, that wicked man shall die in his iniquity; but his blood I will require at your hand (Ezekiel 3:17, 18).

Christian church must remind the state that God is mocked, that power and judgment are in his hands. must find new ways of witnessing to the state, of ing ourselves to social and political decisions, with- denying our basic understanding of the gospel, and out deluding ourselves about the inevitable coercive functions of political government.

Most important of all, having seen the folly of the ways of this world, we must call people into a new way of life in Christ and his church. We must present Christ clearly in all that he began both do do and to teach. We must show clearly that way of life so radically different from the ways of this world, a way of penitence and humility, of love and of power, of sacrifice and reconciliation. We must have faith in our Lord!

His Kingdom Is Forever

What does it mean that Christ is Lord, not only over his church, but even over the nations of this world? That they have rebelled against him is apparent. In fact, some even deny that he is! It means that Christ rules over—and that he overrules—the powers of this world, that even in their rebellion they are made to serve him. This does not mean that the Christian can sit back in complacency, but that he can obey in faith. Even a few of our statesmen have begun to understand such a perspective. George Kennan has spoken out against the American bombings of Dresden and Hamburg, Hiroshima and Nagasaki, and then said this to those who accuse him of accepting defeat:

> I am skeptical of the meaning of 'victory' and 'defeat' in their relation to modern war between great countries. To my mind the defeat is war itself. In any case it seems to me there are times when we have no choice but to follow the dictates of our consciences, to throw ourselves on God's mercy, and not to ask too many questions.[5]

Christ's Lordship means that the day is coming in which he shall have the complete victory over the kingdoms of this world—that their days are numbered. In the resurrection of Jesus, this victory is already written across history. It is already sure.

> Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name; That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father (Philippians 2:9-11).

He who is from the beginning shall reign in the end. He who was with God, and was God, in the creation, shall usher in a new creation. As Cullmann puts it in German, "Christus Mittler der Schöpfung im Anfang. Christus Mittler der Neuschöpfung am Ende der Erde."[6] We read that the whole creation has been groaning in travail and waits with eager longing for deliverance (Romans 8). Nowhere is the picture of our creation and destiny painted more clearly than in Colossians—

> He is the image of the invisible God, the first-born of all creation; for in him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or authorities —all things were created through him and for him.

> He is before all things, and in him all things hold together. He is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning, the first-born from the dead, that in everything he might be pre-eminent. For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of the cross (Colossians 1:15-20).

This is our faith! From the midst of the turmoils of this desperate world, we see Jesus standing above and beyond it all, as Christ and Lord. The terrors of this world drive us not to a frantic conformity, but to a more faithful obedience to Christ. *His Kingdom is forever!*

(Most of the Scripture passages are taken from the RSV)

Footnotes

[1]Oscar Cullmann, "Königherrschaft Christi und Kirche im Neuen Testament," *Theologische Studien*, Heft 10, 1946.
[2]Donald K. Faris, *To Plow With Hope* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1958), p. 17.
[3]Norman A. Wingert, "The Others," *The Mennonite*, October 7, 1958.
[4]Major Eatherly's B-29 flew ahead of the plane actually carrying the bomb and located the target on which the bomb was to be dropped. See "The Men Who Dropped the Bomb on Hiroshima," *Fellowship*, July 1, 1959, and "The Man Who Helped Drop the Bomb: A Correction," *Fellowship*, August 15, 1959.
[5]George F. Kennan, former State Department official, in *The Atlantic*, May, 1959.
[6]Cullmann, *op. cit.*, p. 7.

The Early Mennonite Brethren Church: Baptist or Anabaptist?

By FRANK C. PETERS

MENNONITE BRETHREN have been known to have had a warm feeling toward Baptists, and during the years various attempts have been made to effect a closer relationship between these two groups. Some writers have considered the Mennonite Brethren to be closer to Baptists in their confession and polity than they are to other Mennonite groups. This article shall trace some of the historical developments which brought Mennonite Brethren into close contacts with the Baptists and attempts to show why a complete merger of the two groups was never brought about.

I. MENNONITE BRETHREN AND BAPTISTS IN RUSSIA

A Baptist-oriented Confession of Faith

In 1873 a Russian official visited the Mennonite colonies of the Old Colony settlement in the interest of the proposed conscription laws. He posed the question of the relationship between Mennonite Brethren and the Baptists. In order to convince the interrogator that the Mennonite Brethren Church was fully equipped with a confession of faith of its own, certain brethren took a Baptist confession and rewrote it to include Mennonite distinctives. The Mennonite Brethren had as early as 1862 accepted an existing Mennonite confession as their own, the Rudnerweider Confession, but, according to A. H. Unruh, the Old Colony brethren did not know of this or did not wish to abide by it. The author of the improvised document was Elder Abram Unger, a man greatly given to the Baptist fellowship, and he succeeded in having the document printed.

This Baptist-Mennonite confession of faith, as A. H. Unruh calls it, proved to be a deterrent in the development of the young church. Soon protests were heard in the Mennonite Brethren churches concerning the strong Baptist views expressed in the confession. The Russian officials were no less confused and repeatedly requested information as to which Mennonites of the Chortitza settlement belonged to the Baptists. Finally all Mennonite Brethren of that district were registered as Baptists.

As soon as this government action became known, a delegation of brethren was sent to the *Oberschulze*. This Mennonite official demanded a written statement which could be passed on to the Russian officials seeking clarification. This demand gave rise to a series of documents in which Mennonite Brethren were compelled to clarify their relationship to the Baptists. Active in the writing of such documents was P. M. Friesen.

Upon reading the documents submitted by Mennonite Brethren leaders, the Minister of the Interior issued a statement to the Chortitza office. This letter, dated March 6, 1880, officially declared Mennonite Brethren to be Mennonites rather than Baptists, and the necessary changes were made in the records.

A few years later the issue of Mennonites or Baptists was again revived. In 1896 a Russian officer, Marshall Malama, chairman of the Recruitment Commission, felt that he had been offended by the Mennonite director of the forestry camps of Russia. As a result he made an attempt to declare all Mennonite Brethren as Baptists with the subsequent withdrawal of Mennonite privileges.

lama actually appealed to the Minister of the Interior. December 28, 1896, an answer from the Minister he Interior advised that the statement of March, 1880, still in effect. No Mennonite Brethren were to be istered as Baptists unless they themselves chose to e it so.

lennonite Brethren Confessional Documents

n answer to the problems described above, a series documents were written designed to give information o the relationship of the Mennonite Brethren to the tists.

One article, "Who Are the Members of the Mennonite thren Church?" appeared in the *Mennonitische Blätter* Germany (1896). One cannot help but agree with . Harms that the anonymous author treated the matter h fine objectivity. The author points to the fact that ne of those influenced by the revival expressed inten- s of joining the Baptists while others expressly de- ed their hope of building a church according to the stolic pattern. The article points to a confession of Baptists which was reworded to include Mennonite inctives. It is also mentioned that Mennonite Brethren ers had been ordained by Baptist leaders.

The article chides Mennonite Brethren for certain ons which have given occasion for the accusation they were Baptists at heart. The author, while show- charity toward the Mennonite Brethren, is deeply ved at their attitude toward the Mennonite Church ch they had left.

"Sie sollten sich nicht als die Gemeinschaft der ausnahmslos Heiligen den Mennoniten also der Gemeinschaft der ausnahmslos Verdammten entgegenstellen, wie das manche beschränkte Mitglieder taten; sondern sie hätten viel mehr sollen ein inniges Zusammengehen mit den alten Mennoniten anstreben, die ja ihre leiblichen Väter, Mütter, Brüder und Schwestern sind. Tun sie das nicht, so wird man ein Recht haben, zu behaupten — nicht, dass sie Baptisten seien, sondern dass sie unwissentlich Unwahrheit in der Gemeinde Platz geben."

The answer to this article was written by J. F. Harms, ader of the Mennonite Brethren in the United States. rms answers two questions in his article: "Are We tists?" and "What Is Our Attitude Toward the Older nnonite Church?" (*Zionsbote,* May 21, 1896).

With reference to immersion, which was used to point Mennonite Brethren-Baptist similarities, Harms writes they found light in the writings of Menno Simons. iese Taufform fand man auch mit den Lehren Menno nons übereinstimmend, aus dessen ersten Verhandigen über den Glauben, der der Taufe vorangehen sse, die Brüder auch mit ihrer im unbekehrten tande erlangten Taufe Gewissensskrupel bekamen. ." It seems clear that Harms attempted to set forth Mennonite-Anabaptist frame of reference for the nnonite Brethren Church. That the form of baptism came as a result of studying Anabaptist sources seems doubtful. Certainly triune immersion as practiced by Becker and Bartel had no precedent in Anabaptist literature or tradition.

Harms makes one point very well. If the form of baptism is conclusive proof of the affinity of Mennonite Brethren for the Baptists, then it remains to be said that form was not an issue in the initial secession from the Mennonite parent body. The issue was baptism upon personal faith as the early Anabaptists had proclaimed it in keeping with the New Testament.

Another issue was footwashing. The article by Harms correctly points out that the Mennonite Brethren practice of footwashing refers them to Anabaptist practice rather than to Baptist polity.

Harms asks the reader of his article to consider the development of the early Mennonite Brethren Church. No phase of church polity was directly taken over from the Baptists, but in all matters the struggling church worked out its own polity according to its understanding of the Word of God. To be sure, certain Baptist preachers such as August Liebig had been a great blessing to Mennonite Brethren churches, especially in matters of administration, but such men had not influenced them to forsake their Anabaptist moorings. The ordination of Abram Unger as elder by the Baptist preacher, Oncken, from Hamburg, Germany, is mentioned by Harms. This was probably the case to which the article in the German paper referred; however, the use of the plural could hardly be justified.

In answering the second question concerning the attitude of the Mennonite Brethren Church toward the Mennonite Church of Russia, Harms again makes reference to Menno Simons. He maintains that the Mennonite Brethren are more ready to fellowship with all born-again believers than the older church was. "Je mehr sich daher in den alten mennonitischen Gemeinden geistliches Leben findet und ein Zurückkehren auf schriftgamässem Boden stattfindet, desto mehr wird auch eine Anerkennung seitens der Mennoniten-Brüdergemeinde den alten Mennoniten gegenüber stattfinden."

II. MENNONITE BRETHREN AND BAPTISTS IN THE UNITED STATES

When the Mennonite Brethren arrived in the United States in 1876, they settled in Minnesota, Kansas, Nebraska and South Dakota. Many of the first brethren were of Lutheran background, commonly called the Volga Germans. They experienced many disrupting influences in their attempts to organize a Mennonite Brethren conference in the United States. Here again we notice the contact with the Baptists. A Baptist minister, Janieka by name, entered into the Mennonite Brethren community of Ebenfeld and tried to direct the members into the Baptist Church. Several Volga brethren followed.

The Conference of 1878

Between 1876 and 1880, some two hundred Menno-

nite Brethren families came to the Midwestern states. The majority of these came from the Molotschna and the Kuban areas; a smaller percentage came from the Volga settlements, the Chortitza colony and the Don. After congregations had been established, a desire was felt to organize into closer fellowship as churches.

In 1878 a meeting was called in Nebraska for the purpose of uniting the churches into a conference. It was called by Peter Regier of Nebraska and convened with four brethren representing Kansas and seven coming from Nebraska. Eduard Leppke was elected chairman with Jacob Ehrlich and Peter Regier as secretaries.

The program which was discussed is most interesting to follow. However, for the purpose of the present discussion, only one point should be mentioned. The agenda called for a discussion of the relationship with the Baptists. Should a fellowship be initiated with the already well-established Baptist Church of the United States?

The records reveal that no delegates favored fellowship with "resistant brethren" (Baptists). Two brethren voted in favor of expelling those Mennonite Brethren who violated this decision of the Conference.

It remains to be said that this conference session has never been recognized by later conferences. The various congregations were not properly represented at the sessions and the position taken on various issues did not meet with the favor of later conferences. However, the records do give an insight into the thinking of Mennonite Brethren on the issue of joining the Baptist conference in America.

The Conference of 1892

When the annual Conference of the Mennonite Brethren churches convened October 31, 1892, in Goessel, Kansas, the problem of co-operating with the Baptists was again discussed. Among the delegates was a minister of the Baptist Church, J. Sievers from Kansas City, who desired permission to attend the conference and present the possibility of co-operating in certain areas of service. Since conference sessions were open to members of the Mennonite Brethren Church only, the presence of J. Sievers had to be ratified by official vote of the delegation. He was given opportunity to explain his mission before the official vote was taken. Sievers stated that Baptists felt close to the Mennonite Brethren since both insisted on regeneration as a prerequisite to church membership. In the matter of mode of baptism, they were also one. Furthermore, the Mennonite Brethren Conference made annual contributions to Baptist mission societies. The next logical step would be planned co-operation on a higher level. Upon vote of the delegation, Sievers was asked to withdraw from the sessions with the promise that he would be admitted later, at which time the Conference would give its answer to Sievers' request.

When Sievers re-entered the session, an explanation of the difficulties standing in the way of further co-operation was read to him. The following issues were presented and discussed.

1. When members of the Mennonite Brethren Church are disciplined, they invariably leave before discipline is completed and join the Baptists. It seems that Baptist churches accept them without inquiry into their previous record.

2. When evangelism has been carried out by Mennonite Brethren in outlying areas, those saved are quickly proselyted by the Baptists, making the establishment of a Mennonite Brethren Church in that area impossible.

3. The Mennonite Brethren Church adheres to such principles as nonresistance, abnegation of the oath, footwashing and forbidding of divorce. The Baptists would not endorse these practices.

4. Various practices such as the use of tobacco, attendance at theatres and circuses are forbidden by the Mennonite Brethren Church.

After listening to this report, Sievers agreed that the Baptist churches would recognize the Mennonite Brethren Church and would accept only such members of the church as could present a letter showing that they had been in good standing. The Conference then declared that it would continue to support missions through Baptist channels; yet in all other matters they wished to maintain autonomy.

Conclusion

From the investigation of Mennonite Brethren and Baptist relationships, several findings can be reported.

1. The early Mennonite Brethren were definite in their desire to remain Anabaptist in their confessions. Every attempt was made to declare themselves in harmony with the basic tenets as set forth by Menno Simons.

2. The radical advances toward affiliation with the Baptists were made by isolated individuals who failed to receive the support of the brotherhood.

3. It seems rather clear that the Mennonite Brethren revival was meant to be a return to the Anabaptist vision rather than a deviation from it. The desire to build a community of believers who had personally committed themselves to follow Jesus Christ, and who were willing to live a separated life of holiness, was certainly in keeping with what the Anabaptist forefathers felt was the New Testament pattern for a believers' church.

Literature

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Bernhard Harder's Critique of the Baptists and Mennonite Brethren

By A. P. TOEWS

ERNHARD J. HARDER'S book, *Alexandertal,* deals with a Mennonite settlement in Samara, Russia. On pages 76-81 and in the Appendix, s 96-105, he deals with the origin of the Mennonite hren and their relation to others. This writing is a mentary on these parts.

arder evaluates in his own way the separation of the nonite Brethren from the Mennonite Church in ia. Furthermore, he is also concerned that the Alexrtal community serve as an example of present day nonite interaction and thinking. That this was the or's major interest is evident in that his most con- ve paragraphs deal with the unity in the Mennonite herhood.

he author is one of our few Mennonite idealists. has the courage to say what he feels should be said. y successful he is in bringing Mennonites into closer ionships, the readers will judge for themselves. No ot all will agree with him that we Mennonites should ys aim to draw into closer harmony and effective ess of Christ's love and unity.

The Author's Objective

he closing words of the book express the desire that Mennonites give more thought to remedy the harm the cleavage between the Mennonite Church and Mennonite Brethren has caused. He says Heinrich s, the Gnadenfeld elder, tried to do this with his ic preaching and teaching. For a time he managed ave off an open break but could not prevent it.

hurch history bears constant witness that maintaining y in the church has been its greatest problem. From ime of the Apostles, the *Una Sancta* has had extreme gles. An evangelical Mennonite co-operation is desirable even if it is most difficult to obtain. n observer of this tragic separation, Harder is con- ed that theological disputations avail very little, if ning. Refutations and denunciations are always avail- at bargain rates. Never is one side wholly in the and the other totally in the wrong. As always, this ion in the light of the Scriptures shows gross error oth sides. Only by the application of the ethics of original Mennonite church and the spirit of unity ayed by the Scriptures can misunderstanding, antag- n, and the spirit of separation be subdued and led.

ennonites have never gained much by trying to ig- each other. Striking brethren from records does make them less brethren. Making discrediting judgments and verdicts only reveals faults in self. They are only evidences of feigning and cringing to avoid coming face to face with the truth. The author reminds us of Zinzendorf's well-known hymn,

> Lass uns so vereinigt werden,
> Wie Du mit dem Vater bist,
> Bis schon hier auf dieser Erden
> Kein getrenntes Glied mehr ist;
> Und allein von Deinem Brennen
> Nehme unser Licht den Schein!
> Also wird die Welt erkennen,
> Dass wir Deine Jünger sein.

In this age of atomic fission, the author's greatest desire is to help usher in a harmonious Mennonite fellowship. The Christian church is destined to show forth this unity in Christ. We as Mennonites have the specific duty to make it more fully known through our unique ethic of obedience to the Scriptures (*Nachfolge*), peace and nonresistance.

The Scriptures and Baptism

The Mennonites have always aimed to base all their church rules and confessions upon the Scriptures. Johann Cornies, more than a hundred years ago, said the first duty of the Mennonites is to teach their children to fear God and honor biblical virtues, and then proceed to other studies. Catechistical and baptismal instructions were always provided by the church. Two times a year the Mennonite faith was presented to the church in the form of twenty-four articles. With these and special Bible lessons given in the homes during the winter months, the members of the church were regularly acquainted with the doctrine of the church and the Scriptures.

Various opinions arose among the Mennonites when they began to attend outside Bible schools and received other non-Mennonite instruction. Mennonite doctrine requires that every individual accept salvation personally solely through grace. Conversion takes place when an individual presents himself to Jesus Christ in repentance and accepts the redemption from sin provided through Christ's atonement. The church in this entire process plays no part except that it acquaints the convert with the plan of salvation. This emphasis of the individual is easily carried over to the interpretation of the Scriptures and religious expression. With non-Mennonite biblical interpretation came independent Mennonite thinking and preaching. At times this independence assumed such proportions that it became defiant of all former practice.

This individualism revealed itself strongly in the rite of baptism. The Baptists' mode of baptism by immersion was readily accepted, together with an individual and personal conversion experience which they sharply brought into focus. The Mennonites always taught a personal salvation and stressed full obedience to the Scriptures. It seemed to the Mennonite Brethren as if the Baptists offered sounder biblical teaching in some respects than the Mennonites. Baptism to them was a symbol of the old Adam having died and risen to a new life. Unless this death was signified by immersion, the Mennonite Brethren insisted it was no baptism.

Here Harder voices strong objection. He goes on to say that our baptism is a symbol of having been forgiven and converted. Since this can take place only once in a person's life, there can only be one baptism. Neither can a person die to self in salvation more than once. A person is saved or he is not. Works follow salvation. We cannot confuse salvation and sanctification. Our baptism is not a part of the righteousness Jesus talks about in Matthew 3:15. There Jesus spoke of fulfilling all righteousness so that he could justify the sinner before God. Only Christ's death and grace can atone for sin. Our own righteousness plays no part in our justification. Repeated baptisms are symbols of victories of sanctification and not symbols of conversion. For such the Scriptures make no allowance.

Scripture teaches baptism in the name of the Trinity upon repentance and acceptance of Jesus Christ as Saviour. Only in Acts nineteen do we find a second baptism, and this is because the first was not performed in the name of the Trinity.

The Polish and Russian Evangelical Baptist churches had no appreciation for the unity and oneness in the Mennonite Church. They had split in many directions. That some Mennonites followed the Baptists, the author thinks, is sheer indiscretion and wantonness. Instead of having Christ as Lord of the church, they placed man at the head.

Purity of the Church

The matter of repentance and salvation carried over to the original Mennonite conception of the pure church. All Mennonite churches practiced discipline; especially in matters of public offense such as drunkenness, immorality, quarrelling and covetousness. Such discipline when carried to its logical conclusion terminated in excommunication. This involved not only the church but also the life in the community. A disciplined subject was a marked person in a Mennonite society. He had no share in the periodic communion services. This was considered a serious deprivation.

The author maintains that the Mennonite Brethren used this purification of the church in their own way. They said believers should not be yoked with unbelievers, nor the righteous with the unrighteous. Those having a more demonstrative conversion believed that their conversion was more real. They considered themselves "purer" Mennonites and could not, therefore, stay in an "impure" Mennonite church. With this withdrawal, they left a stigma on the mother church. It was a verdict of impurity and falling short of the ideal that Menno Simons had of the pure church. Stimulated by the nineteenth century pietistic movement, they attempted to get back to the piety found in the Apostolic church.

Once more, Harder believes that the Mennonite Brethren were sadly mistaken. According to the description of the original church in the Acts and the Epistles to the Corinthians, it fell far short of perfect purity. Nevertheless, Paul never favored breaking up a group of believers nor forsaking it. Believers who did not measure up to the norm of Christian living as set forth by the church were to be helped. Paul stayed in the church and continued to call them brethren. To him, they were all brethren, not only a small isolated group. Harder asserts that those are brethren in Christ Jesus who abide with him in faith.

The Division

A division in a church occurs when there is sinning against the commandment of brotherly love. This seems to have been the case during the time of separation between the Mennonite Church and the Mennonite Brethren. Apparently both sides believed that they were in the right. Where the Mennonite church stayed with more orthodox practices, the Mennonite Brethren in instances disregarded Mennonite ways and adopted newly innovated Baptist convictions and practices based on strong pietistic and personal emotional experiences.

Soon these revived pietistic expressions deteriorated into a peculiar dogma which in turn gave rise to an ethic founded upon certain proof texts. Lines between the present and future church, a holy God and merely religious men were overlooked and clarity was jeopardized.

Paul writes to the Galatians that they shall fulfill the law of Christ by drawing near to each other and carry each other's burdens. The strong are to help the weak even as Christ did not live merely to please himself (Romans 15:1, 2). This responsibility is given to every church member. Scripture tells us to stay with those who need our help and see them through their difficulty. Harder tells us that exactly the opposite was done. A Christian continues as such only through confession and forgiveness. All promises in the New Testament have their fulfillment in the suffering, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Man's own piety falls far short of the perfection he must have in Christ.

Every Mennonite church desires to be as pure as possible. However, a perfect church exists only as an ideal. When we no longer are aware of our own shortcomings, we have only bigotry and have lost our sweet Christian savor. Insincerity, sooner or later, always reveals itself as a painful sore on one's own body.

Non-Mennonite By-Products

The author points out several by-products that the ration of the Mennonite Church and the Mennonite thren brought about.

. *A definite mode of baptism* was instituted. No one n of baptism had ever been determined in the Men-ite Church. Every church was permitted to have the n it chose. Scripture was interpreted as insufficiently nite on this point to be able to impose one certain n. Neither Menno Simons nor the Anabaptist leaders scribed a form.

. There was too much *subjectivity* in the new Men-ite Brethren groups. The Mennonite Brethren de-ed this themselves and sought to overcome it. Peter n and others made sincere efforts to direct the new nnonite Brethren churches away from individualism. s has often been a by-product of pietism.

. *A non-Mennonite ethic* emerged in Mennonite thren circles. Original Mennonitism teaches a with-wal from the world but insists on maintaining the owship. Mennonites always preached freedom of science and toleration. Our fathers were very loath udging others. With the break between the Menno-Church and the Mennonite Brethren, this attitude of ual good will deteriorated.

. Mennonites do not resort to *dogma*. Scripture takes its place. With the acceptance of Baptist principles at the expense of Mennonite doctrine, proof texts became the planks of the platform from which the church life was proclaimed and preached. The result of this was a form of isolation for each group. The first division became a vicious circle of centripetal nature flinging its darts into both camps.

5. *Non-Mennonite Bible schools* aggravated the problem. The Berlin Allianz-Bibelschule was especially guilty in that it taught a second adult baptism and favored separations in the Mennonite camp. The customary Mennonite emotional stability was turned into a non-Mennonite type of expression. Instead of an assimilation came a dissimilation.

The book gives an excellent historical account of the Alexandertal Mennonite settlement. The part dealing with the division in the church presented here is vividly related. The author's objective is to bring about more unity, understanding and greater appreciation for each other among all Mennonite groups. This is very laudable and should have our wholehearted endorsement. What should not be forgotten, however, is that we dwell less on the negative and division and more on the positive and the unity we have through Jesus Christ. The book has valuable information for all Mennonites. Surely our Christian maturity will enable us to glean from it that which edifies and enhances our brotherly love.

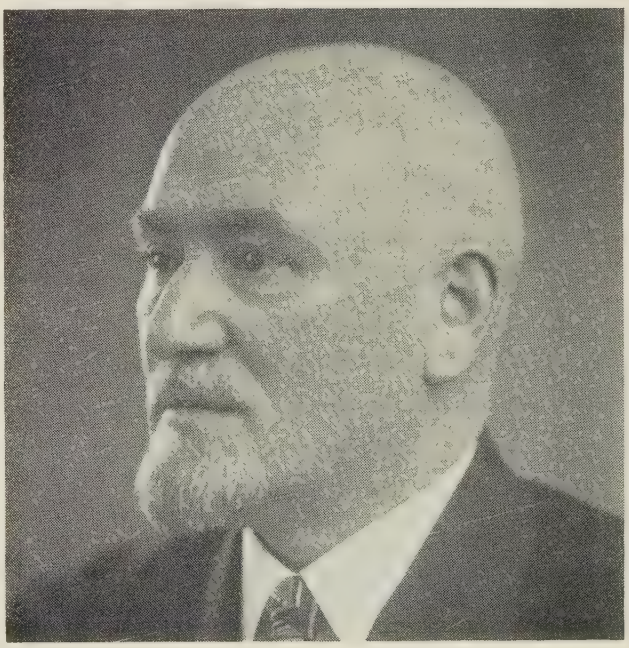
sinessman and Theologian

Bernhard Harder

By CORNELIUS KRAHN

BERNHARD Harder was born December 15, 1888, at Alexandertal, Samara, Russia. His father, Julius Harder, had settled there coming from Klein-tenau, Danzig, just before Bernhard was born. Soon r that his parents died. His great desire for a formal cation was not fulfilled. At the age of sixteen he t to South Russia as an apprentice to learn the trade smith and mechanic. He was baptized by the well-wn elder, Heinrich Dirks, in the Gnadenfeld con-gation. After the years of his apprenticeship, he ned a shop in the village Neuhoffnung at Alexander-Samara, which he soon discontinued. In a nearby sian village, he established a business in agricultural hinery with others under the firm name Harder, be and Company.

his business was so prosperous that it soon established e branches. By 1910 it distributed agricultural ma-lery imported from abroad and produced in Russia ng the population of the Volga region consisting of sian, Tatar and German population. Harder spoke of these languages fluently. He traveled extensively over Russia. Contacts with foreign representatives



Mennonite district government building in Alexandertal and a Mennonite home in Alexandertal, Samara.

satisfied his insatiable hunger for knowledge and education. During the evenings he read extensively and acquired the training he needed.

In the midst of this active life, World War I stopped everything and directed his activities into entirely different channels. Being a German citizen, he was interned in the province of Orenburg with some 20,000 other Germans. Here he again had opportunity to study, associate with people who enriched his experience and gave him an opportunity to prepare himself for his future task. After the Revolution, he was employed in his home community for a while in a co-operative store. At this time he started work among the young people of his church. The Soviet Revolution convinced him that there would be limitations to personal initiative unless he decided to leave Russia.

After eight weeks of adventurous travel, he arrived in Marienburg, the area which his parents had left. For a while he served as a minister and in 1923 he accepted the call of the mission society, "Licht im Osten," Wernigerode. This mission society was organized to spread the gospel among the Russian prisoners of war in Germany and in Russia. The Harders became the house parents of the seminary and he also taught some classes in the school. He was well prepared to do this work among students of various nationalities from Russia. After the close of the seminary in 1927, he spent two years in evangelistic work among the Polish, Russian and German Evangelical and Baptist churches of Poland and the Baltic states. In 1930 he became the manager of the "Grosstadtmission für Hamburg und Altona" (city mission).

He spent two decades—the best years of his life—in this cause. The city mission consisted of a home for the aged, children's home, a home for young girls and a training center for Slavic women for work in eastern Europe. The Mennonite Church building of Hamburg at the Grosse Freiheit was acquired and served as a city mission station. Harder was the editor of *Wort und Werk* which was read in Germany, Switzerland and other foreign countries. During the Hitler regime it presented a fearless, Biblical witness.

Even during the most terrible bombardments of Hamburg in 1943 when not only his own home but much of the property of the city mission was destroyed, he did not give up his work. His march through the burning city to look after the various branches of the mission

B. Harder (left) as merchant in Davlekanovo, 1911.

A Tatar family traveling by farm wagon.

hard Harder (with cane) teaching a Bible school in Poland, 1926. Student body of seminary, Wernigerode, showing in first row the faculty (right to left) Walter Fellmann, Assur, Bernhard Harder, Jakob Kroeker, Walter Jack.

k became symbolic of his life work. He never up and continued in a persistent way to do the k of the Lord. After the war, he devoted the re- ning years of his active life to the reconstruction he homes. When, at the age of 72, he turned the ership of the city mission over to his successor, ything had been rebuilt. Meanwhile, Mrs. Harder, shared all the work and the hardships with him, passed away in 1949.

nce 1951 Bernhard Harder lives in Hanau together his oldest son, Alexander Harder, who is an artist. *Mennonite Life,* October, 1953, page 147.) His nd son is Hans Harder who is professor and lecturer whose novels have found recognition in Germany abroad. (See *Mennonite Life,* April, 1953, p. 78.) lthough retired, Bernhard Harder still finds many ortunities even after his recent 80th birthday to e by preaching and lecturing. His excellent knowl- of people, his constant studies in the realm of logical and general literature have kept him informed. has written numerous books.

In his literary activities it should be mentioned that he was co-editor of the paper *Dein Reich komme* at Wernigerode, 1925-29. In 1929 he edited *Russische Blätter* and from 1930 to 1951 he edited and wrote many articles in *Wort und Werk,* Hamburg.

In 1928 he published the book *Russlands Sendung.* In 1947 he wrote *Die Gemeinde.* In 1955 he contributed an article on his home community which was published in *Kalender, Heimatbuch der Ostumsiedler.* His latest book, *Alexandertal,* is reviewed in this issue of *Mennonite Life.* Harder has lived a rich life and made an outstanding contribution in the Kingdom of God within and outside of the Mennonite brotherhood. His visit to America and lectures in the Mennonite congregations prior to World War II are vividly remembered by many.

Harder family with Alexander and Hans Harder families.

Former Hamburg-Altona Mennonite church used as city mission by B. Harder.

The Agricultural Revolution and the Task of the Church

By HARLEY J. STUCKY

IN the last issue of *Mennonite Life* we described the current agricultural revolution and noted its impact upon Mennonites. In that article we also noted that the Mennonites were themselves pioneers in the agricultural revolution of the 1870's to World War I, during which period the prairie grasslands of America were broken up and planted to wheat, corn, oats and so on. In the process the Mennonites established thriving agricultural communities, and some of these communities are currently threatened with extinction.

The Disintegration of Rural Communities

Mennonite communities were relatively prosperous and stable from 1900 to 1945. These communities, varying in size from a half dozen or so families to several hundred or more families, were at once geographic, psychological and spiritual entities, centering largely in the country church. Alexanderwohl was the largest rural congregation in Kansas. Communities consist of people living in a "given indentifiable area, associating and interacting within it." In the Mennonite communities, there was a recognizable affinity. Geographically, community members lived in close proximity. Economically, they were all farmers, farm workers or otherwise engaged in occupations more or less directly connected with agriculture. Culturally, they were largely German in origin and outlook, and religiously they were all Mennonites and of the same persuasion, often living in the midst of a larger community of Mennonites.

Today, under the impact of the agricultural revolution, Mennonites no longer live in close geographic proximity. Individuals, either as students or adults, move out into the great urban world and lose their identity. So geographically Mennonites are spreading out. Economically, there is a proliferation of vocational interests; culturally, we are in various strata of complete assimilation to the surrounding American culture. We have in varying degrees cast off our Germanic cultural background. Religiously, we are subjected to the influences of a barrage of ideas and opinions that range all the way from unitarianism to fundamentalism and from Christian Science to Pentecostalism. So we have lost much of our affinity, and the farm revolution, coupled with other influences, raises in a most significant manner the question of "church survival" and church extension.

We might summarize this impact as follows:

1. The Mennonite rural communities are still intact, but there is evidence of a declining vitality due to the declining rural population and the urban migrations and the confusion and uncertainty which has followed in the wake of the agricultural revolution. 2. The stronger communities—stronger in terms of numbers, economic wealth and the church leadership—have generally fared better than the weaker ones. 3. Due to a loss of numbers, economic wealth and leadership, many rural churches are weakening. 4. There is a steady stream of farmers and their children pouring into the city. If we used the national figures, we would have a decline of approximately 3 per cent in rural population since 1947, or a total decline of 36 per cent. The average increase in birth is 1.3 to 1.5 per cent per year, although in some cases it has reached 4 per cent annually. I believe that the decline in Mennonite communities has been less than 3 per cent and the birth rate above 2 per cent. In the Western District Conference of the General Conference, we have 13,500 church members today. Let us assume that in 1947 there were 6,000 farmers. According to the national average, farmers should have declined by ⅓ or 2,000 people, and they should have increased in numbers from 6,000 to 7,000. Thus, we would have a total of approximately 3,080 people migrating to the city in twelve years or 256 people a year—enough for a good-sized congregation. The figures are hypothetical, but they are illustrative of the problem. 5. We have failed to build city churches as rapidly as the farm to city migrations would seem to suggest we should. Therefore, we must have a leakage of people in the process.

What Should a Prospective Mennonite Farmer Do?

The following are some factors that farmers might consider before making other vocational choices:

1. Assess your own qualifications. a) Do you have any managerial ability? The difference between a situation and a system is often the difference between success and failure, and it is essentially a product of management. Farmers often fail because of their own inability to adapt their programs fast enough to the new scientific and technological advances in plant and animal development and farm machinery. In view of the rapid strides being made, perhaps no one can fully cope with them under any circumstances. b) Determine whether you have any interests in the scientific or technological field. Admittedly, frugality and hard work go a long way, yet in this day of technological and scientific farming, the days of the illiterate successful farmer seem numbered. c) Are you willing to work and adventure? To farm is to risk time and energy and technological know-how on the uncertainties of a future reward. If you do not want to risk, perhaps you had better stay close to the sources

weekly paycheck. If you have some of these quali- you are potentially a successful farmer and there its for you a goodly income. Michigan University nomists found that the farmer who has adequate re- rces and top level management ability can look for- d to an income comparable to those earned in non- n occupations.

. Make your decision at the earliest possible date, but not hurry it. At the Farm Study Conference, it was erally agreed that working in both town and country -called part-time farming or suitcase farming) is un- sfactory because it usually results in neglecting one or other occupation, or both, and because it results in ssive time demands which weaken home, church and munity activities. If you need time to cast about, not hesitate to give yourself a trial, but you will prob- do well to make a clear-cut decision at the earliest . Having made your decision, do not hesitate to e forward, for the "man who sets his hands to the v and looks back is not worthy of the Kingdom."

. Consider your family, your Mennonite faith and r church. Consider the future of your family—could transmit some desirable habit patterns and attitudes, perhaps a more vibrant faith in the vocation of your ce? Some jobs may be financially more rewarding, they are ethically wrong and spiritually degrading. re is always some "forbidden fruit" in the garden. at about your church? Perhaps you have played a l role, you have given leadership and your leaving small church together with your family would nearly its doom! Some farmers are literally the salt of a rch or community, and without their presence it will much of its savor. The least Mennonites could do o give their brethren members of the fellowship first ce in renting their farms or buying their land. I be- e that the first notice of land sales should be in the rch bulletin, so as to give the members of the fel- ship, the church, a chance.

. Before leaving your farm, you should note that the alled urban advantages—electricity, running water, o-TV and what have you—are diminishing in im- ance ever since the can-opener found its way into the ntry.

. Last, but not least, before deciding to abandon life he farm, you should take a long look into the future. re upon the horizon you will note the factors of "the ulation explosion" spoken of in the press as the "ba- oom!" What does such a population increase mean? It means that there will be more people to feed and, e, a greater demand for food. b) It means that the -land ratio, the number of arable acres per person, decline, and this will mean that land will become e valuable and may change our economy of agricul- abundance to an economy of agricultural scarcity. of this means that as the American population in- es, the number of acres of available arable land per person will decline, and as it declines, the price of land will probably go up and the land will have to be farmed more efficiently in order to provide enough food for the population. We must realize as never before that land is the basic natural resource on earth, and although man uses land to fulfill a variety of needs, his principal relationship with it is in the production of food.

6. Before leaving the farm, you should note that urban life too has its problems. In many instances the man's income does not seem sufficient and so the wife and other members of the family work. In other words, the city, like the farm, has its share of people who find it difficult to make ends meet on breadwinner's wages or salary.

As long as there are people, there will always be a demand for agricultural produce, so if you choose to be a farmer—be a good one! While farming as efficiently as possible may increase overproduction, it will contribute to your morale and is essential for your economic survival. Many people think that farming efficiently means a further extension of operation covering more acres and so on, but it may actually mean a more intensive operation; by concentrating and specializing, the actual number of acres needed may be of minor significance in relation to the total operation.

In terms of the modern criteria of providing a greater return with less energy, are you awake? If you are, there is hope for the survival of some of our church institutions in rural communities, especially where farmers resort to intensive operations. What of our church? Is it alert in terms of relating the significant agricultural developments to population trends in our urban-rural communities and their significance for Mennonite institutions!

The Agricultural Revolution and the City

Here are a few summary reminders:

1. A city dweller has a tremendous stake in the productivity of food, and, therefore, he owes to his country cousins all the aid and encouragement he can give. Cities are possible only because of increased productivity. "As long as everyone had to raise his own food, there could be no cities." Without such prolific agricultural productivity, each of us would be struggling as best we could to wrest a living from nature. Thus, without an agricultural surplus, cities would not be possible. Moreover, every one of us really wants an abundance of food, and no one of us really wants to live on the subsistence level or worry about our next meal.

2. The production per capita is probably greater on the farm and is growing more than twice as fast as the production per capita among city dwellers. Farm production should be higher because farmers have a larger investment per capita. Farm investment per worker in the Corn Belt is $50,000, whereas the average investment per worker is about $15,000. Why is the farm output per worker high? Because depressing agricultural prices are forcing farmers to improve their efficiency or be

"squeezed out of farming." From 1952 through 1957, with every increasing inflation, farm prices actually decreased 20 per cent in terms of total farm income. Where else do we have such a record! What business has taken such a cut, to say nothing of keeping up with the cost of living? Actually, the city dweller is lagging behind. Perhaps the time will come when similar progress will occur in town and city vocations. Ralph J. Cordiner, the president of General Electric announced at the end of 1954 that by 1965 his company would have to produce and sell twice the volume of goods with only 11 per cent more workers. In general, however, the urban per capita output records are pale in comparison with the tremendous strides of American farmers.

3. Farmers and their town and city cousins ought to welcome the agricultural revolution because it is a tremendous leap in efficient food production which will ultimately register in lower prices for consumers and greater profits for producers.

4. Are the lower prices paid for farm commodities reflected in prices charged by the local grocery? No. In 1958 60 cents out of every dollar Americans spent for food went to the people who bought, handled, transported, processed, packaged and sold farm products. Percentage wise and dollarwise, food marketing costs are at the highest level since 1940. As customers, we want "convenience foods, built in maid service, heat and serve rolls, pre-baking, pre-cutting, better packaging." We did not have these services in 1940, and they cost us $27 billion in 1957, or more than twice the original cost of the products. Someone has figured out that if the Kansas farmer gave his wheat away, the 20-cent loaf of bread would still cost 17½ cents; and if the cotton producer gave his cotton away, we would still pay $2.75 for a $3.00 cotton shirt. As city dwellers, it is time for us to see that we, as well as the farmers, are living off farm produce. We must also note that more efficient farm production will not be apparent when your wife makes your weekly purchase of groceries.

5. The agricultural revolution will free more farmers, and certainly more children of farmers, to migrate to the city. As city church members, you must be ready to welcome and to extend a helping hand to your country cousins. You ought to keep in mind that the economic forces are ruthless, with the result that many farmers are crushed, others frozen out and the injustices and inequities often leave permanent scars of bitterness and hatred. Unfortunately, many of these people will become sour on their Mennonite faith or disgusted with their country brethren, and thus would like to escape or flee from the Mennonite faith. Also remember town or city life is a new experience for many, baffling and confusing, and the adjustment to its life difficult in such a short space of time. You can ease the burden, and your timely counsel and friendship might save and redeem many of these people for the Mennonite church and Christianity in general. You should also remember that by and large it is the small farmer, though one who could no longer stand the pace, or the person who makes his transition immediately following his education, who comes to the city. The farmer might be sour, but the latter is unsettled.

6. As a town or city dweller, you have a responsibility to plan, promote and work long and arduously to develop your community in size, importance, services, job opportunities, etc. Why do some town and villages ebb away while others grow? Perhaps it is due to geographical accident, such as fertile soil, or a coveted resource, or maybe it is a stroke of fortune that comes by way of communication arteries. But more often than not, it is the result of deliberate planning and promotion. In a similar way the successful agricultural community is not the product of happenstance, but the result of systematic and deliberate effort. This responsibility is yours because towns and cities are the focal concentrations of power and culture in a community.

The Task of the Church

1. We must encourage our people to become as progressive and efficient in their farm operations as possible. This means that we will seek as farmers to utilize all the advances of modern science and technology. Hitherto our church has failed to support such a program, but the time has come when we must recognize that God does not want us to practice inefficient and slovenly farm operations. Nor will the methods of 1920 save our communities. We must consider, though not accept without discrimination, the practices of society in the economic and social order.

2. We must encourage the development of the Mennonite faith in the city or on the farm wherever our people are. To do this, we must give up the dichotomy of putting rural virtues against urban vices. The farm revolution is diminishing to the vanishing point most of the so-called rural virtues to which we have clung so tenaciously. Let me illustrate. There was a time when our church boldly proclaimed that agriculture stimulated the Christian faith, because the farmer, as he plows, cultivates, sows and reaps, is daily thrust upon the resources of God. In discovering the law of land, he is discovering the law of God, we said. City people, by contrast, were supposed to be living in a man-made mechanical world where the elements of nature had relatively little effect upon his well-being; and so it was only natural, so we insisted, that he could not worship God with as much enthusiasm as his country cousin. Today, however, we are living in an age when men are manipulating activities on the farm, with science, technology, irrigation and economic organization to achieve greater productivity, and thus the farmer, like his city cousin, is increasingly living in a man-manipulated world. Or, we said that farming promoted thrift and frugality, and we remembered that our forefathers had made the great

erican desert blossom through frugal living. We de-ed, by contrast, that the commercial world of the urged men to spend freely, so as to distribute more ds and services, in order that the community might som with more jobs and greater rewards for goods services. Today the farmer finds that he too is liv-in a commercial world, that he must rely heavily on lit, he must spend money, often in a near-reckless ner to make money. We would go on to analyze r so-called rural virtues, such as the concept of self-nce, the dignity of labor, wide range of experience family and community living, and in every instance lieve we would find that their uniqueness is disap-ing.

We must conclude with E. G. Kaufman when he says, her the Mennonite Gospel is fit for the city or it fit." Either our faith is revelant for our age or it ot. I believe it is, and by our collective action we going to decide whether the moorings of our dis-tive faith are grounded solely in our rural way of or not! Thus, we shall decide whether our age, n and city, will accept the sovereignty of God, the dship of Christ, the concept of the church and the dity of the Christian life, which includes integrity, and nonresistance, benevolence, family fidelity and centrality of Christian ethics, or not.

. As a church, we must assume more responsibility elping our young people find themselves and evolve organization which will strengthen weakened rural rches. Mennonites dare not abandon their non-pay-outposts, as Protestantism has abandoned the heart of city for the suburbs. Perhaps the church should or-ze and buy land or develop credit facilities—strength-our mutual aid program.

. Can we as a church confront our rural Mennonites, and young alike, with a greater enthusiasm for the nnonite faith so that we can eliminate the leakage n the Mennonite fold in the migration which must itably occur from the country to the city? In 1929, Western District Conference of the General Confer-had 58 churches and a total membership of 9,201. 1933, we had 63 churches in the Western District 10,224 members. Now it is true that we have grown e, for in 1958 it was reported that we have 13,400 bers. However, if we use the normal index of growth rate for the past 50 or 100 years, we find we should have some 18 to 20,000 members, even if we had made no converts, but simply reared our own children.

The Farm Study Conference findings speak to this point in the following passage: "1) The movement of our people from the country to the city is not necessarily bad in itself, however, many Mennonites moving to the city are lost to the Mennonite churches. 2) In view of this trend, the country church is called upon to do a more effective job of implanting our Mennonite faith prior to migration to the city. People moving to the city ought to be prepared for the change. 3) The home will have to assume greater responsibility in furthering our Mennonite heritage."

5. The rural church may have to be revitalized with better trained personnel, functional facilities, relocation and consolidation, and a more thorough commitment to the Gospel of Christ.

6. As a conference, we must deliberately plant city churches. This Mennonite city church ought to gather up Mennonites moving to town and be evangelical in its outreach. Since we are of rural background, we fail to appreciate adequately how Paul carried his missionary program to the city and how the city churches became the hub of Christianity in the first three centuries.

7. The conferences must seize the initiative rather than sit idly by in the midst of change. We should energetically plan and actively struggle to forge destiny. Too often our problems are the result of drifting rather than careful planning.

In conclusion, we must note that there are a number of indications of a new awakening among Midwestern Mennonites. The Farm Study Conference, the Conference on the Christian and Business, the establishment of committees in small towns to stimulate and encourage industry, and the establishment of city churches in Topeka, Kansas City, Denver and other places all suggest that there is a growing awareness of the impact of the agricultural revolution. Life is always in a state of flux, although the rate of change is not always equally great. Nevertheless, God is above it all, and with his blessing and energetic planning and vision on our part, Mennonites may continue to prosper and multiply in both the country and the city.

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Toward a Faith of Our Children

By MRS. EMRY A. RUTH

"Where Did Our Family Come From?"

A NUMBER of year ago, when I was very young, I remember asking my parents one evening, "Where did our family come from?" We had been discussing family backgrounds at school—either in geography or history class—and I had never before given the subject much thought. The fact that we spoke two dialects of German at home as fluently as we spoke English had never registered somehow, and my folks had been sure that the subject had been discussed often enough in my hearing; but when you are the ninth child in a family of ten, certain bits of information sometimes bypass you.

So my Mother nodded to one of my older sisters, who then concentrated several hundred years of Mennonite wanderings from country to country into a few casual sentences, and my skeptical mind dismissed the whole matter as a legend almost on a par with the stork and Santa Claus. And the romance of the story of the Mennonites did not get through to me.

We attended church and Sunday school regularly in Moundridge. While teaching church school in Wichita during these last twelve or more years, I have often thought back over the eighteen years I spent in Moundridge church schools in an effort to determine what religious concepts do get "through" to boys and girls. I have wondered about Mennonite concepts in particular, and have had to come to the conclusion, rightly or wrongly, that very little was ever said to me in church school about Mennonites as such.

There are other denominations in Moundridge, you know, and we grew up with the Lutherans and the Methodists and the Evangelicals, but we were Mennonites and we knew it. We had the natural feeling of superiority that goes with being part of a majority group, so why should we be bothered with such impractical matters as Mennonite history and the peculiarities of the Mennonite faith? Although the love and kindness inherent in the personalities of my Sunday school teachers was always very obvious, I cannot remember that Mennonite convictions, as contrasted with other concepts of Christianity, were touched on very often.

Memorizing Scriptures

We went to summer Bible school too. We had to. There we memorized the books of the Bible, the Beatitudes and rattled off the Ten Commandments—none of these skills are among my accomplishments today, although I can still find my way around the Bible without consulting the index too often. Then when we had memorized our assignment, we got out our sewing. We had little cards—about four by five inches with numbered dots, and we sewed with colored embroidery thread from one dot to another. At the close of two or three weeks of Bible school, the fastest memorizers had the greatest quantity of embroidered cards, and for all I knew, boys and girls all over American were sewing little cards and memorizing words they did not understand just as we were.

All the denominations were just the same, except for —what? We did not know; we were not told. Sometimes I got the impression it had something to do with family names, but was sure that was not the whole story either.

Now, is that tolerance? Or carelessness?

When we reached our teens, we memorized the catechism—or half tried to. Here we were taught the Mennonite interpretation of Christianity as though it were the only interpretation of Christianity, and we believed it and were baptized into that belief.

I cannot speak for other people, but I know that as far as I was concerned, I was living too close to the trees to be able to see the forest. It took me a few years of living in Wichita to find out what a good thing we had had. I had to get away among other people before I realized what a Mennonite is, how a Mennonite is different from other professing Christians and why I am pleased to number myself with the Mennonites.

Preparing Youth for the City

But every year our denomination loses many Mennonites who, for one reason or other, see fit to exchange their religious heritage—sometimes for a spiritual mess of pottage. One reason for this is, I am convinced, a lack of understanding of the Mennonite traditions and a lack of appreciation for this heritage.

How can our children be taught this appreciation? Are they too young for it? Should we refrain from bothering them with it just now?

Should all religious differences be soft-pedaled until our boys and girls are almost-adult and ready for the draft or perhaps madly infatuated with a member of a Christian denomination more or less incompatible to Mennonites?

Anyone who has even tried to lower that "boom" knows well enough that young-adulthood is much too late to start teaching the verities of the Christian faith as our Anabaptist forefathers saw them.

Well, then. If young-adulthood is too late, perhaps the n-aged adolescent is the place to start.

Now, tell me frankly. Have you ever tried to tell an lescent anything that is a little different from the nmonly accepted opinion of his crowd? Too late!

That leaves childhood for our starting time. And the rch school, in co-operation with the Christian home, he place to start. Unless, of course, it is immaterial you whether your youngsters and the youngsters given your care during the church school hours stay with nnonite convictions and point of view, or not.

I have to admit that to me the perpetuation of the nnonite ideals and interpretation of Christian living more important than the mere retention of the de-national name. For that reason I am not too upset en our children, of their own free will (and not while ler any type of coercion—either pseudospiritual, eco-nic or romantic) leave the Mennonite church for a ilar denomination; but I propose for them to know t principles their fathers have espoused for the past r hundred years. I would have them know where faith is stronger and more idealistic, as well as more patible with the teachings of Jesus, than many of the hs offered so conveniently on every side.

t seems to me sometimes that people who live in pre-ninantly rural communities think they can be sure their children's future course. They think the odds fairly well fixed in their favor when it comes to the nces that their children will grow up in the church, ry in the church and stay in the church. But they forgetting that, as the population of these rural areas reases, more and more of the children will be leaving farms, and they will move to the cities.

f the Mennonites as a whole decide to ignore and acize the city Mennonites as being not really Menno-s because they have left the farm, and attempt to p this a predominantly rural religion, I am inclined to eve that we will become progressively weaker in re-on to the other denominations in America. Let us ember that Anabaptism originated in cities and be-e rural only after severe persecutions began to drive people into hiding in the rural areas.

Do you know that there are several thousand trans-nted Mennonites in Wichita who do not want to known by that name? Is it fair to blame the Wichita rch for this mass "defection from the faith"? We too liberal for some—too cold for some—too Bethel lege-minded for some—too countrified for some—too ll for some——too big for others. I suspect that the t lies not so much with us as it lies with the home rches who have failed to teach their young people t a Mennonite really is or should be.

Telling the Story

We at Wichita are a conglomeration of High German Low German, Swiss and Bavarian, Polish and Gali-, Volhynian and Pennsylvania German. When our day school wanted to tell our children in our church what Mennonites are (and they need to know in Wichita because they are not part of a majority in that town), we looked and looked but could find nothing written on the subject on children's level, so we wrote our own little Mennonite history, cut stencils and duplicated copies of a little booklet. This booklet became our text.

In telling the story, we must start with the church as it was in medieval times, show the need for a reformation and how that reformation was brought about. Do not be afraid to touch upon controversial subjects (such as indulgences, transubstantiation, corruptness of the established church and even the political implications of a state church) with the mistaken idea that ten and twelve year olds are too innocent to follow the plot.

Tell them of Luther's courageous stand, and of how the Anabaptists picked up where he left off; where the Mennonites got their name and how the peaceful Anabaptists were preserved when all warlike Anabaptists were destroyed. Make them feel a kinship with their forefathers who died martyrs' deaths rather than live a lie by professing what they could not in good conscience believe.

The Romance of the Story

Show the romance of their wanderings—almost always by invitation, (they usually were invited into some countries almost at the very time they were being "invited" out of others.) Show how the different ethnic groups of Mennonites differ in culture because of the customs of areas in which they lived for some periods of time.

Leave them feeling proud of their denomination, even with its shortcomings, rather than being apologetic for it. Show them the contributions of early Anabaptist thought to American religious culture and freedom as it exists today. The basic religious toleration of the true Mennonite with his doctrine of the priesthood of the believer and the right, yes, even the duty of each Christian to search the scriptures and interpret them for himself, as well as the Mennonite stand on nonresistance and overcoming of evil with good, far outweigh the ethics of many of America's large denominations.

Then if your children want to move away from the home community, and if for some reason or other they feel the desire to compromise with their neighbors of other religious "families," at least they have been taught what it is that they are leaving. If they are told young enough and often enough, they will carry with them the sense of assurance and the social poise that comes from the knowledge that their heritage is good.

Tolerance and Conviction

Just one thing more: I do not want what I have said to be interpreted as provincialism on my part. I agree with Oberholtzer when he said, "I am far from believing that there are no true Christians outside the Mennonite brotherhood." But to me, religious tolerance does not imply that there are no essential differences among the various groups being "tolerated." Some ideals are un-

questionably higher than others, some principles and standards superior to the principles and standards accepted by society as a whole. In fact, I have come to believe that the people most tolerant of their neighbor's differing convictions and beliefs are those with the deepest convictions and the strongest beliefs of their own. Only by deepening our own religious understanding can we hope to comprehend the depths of our neighbor's religious views.

Our Mennonite forefathers had deep convictions, and out of these convictions grew a tolerance and reverence for their neighbor's differences that was so deep it led to the extreme position of refusing to bear arms against those who differed, even though this sometimes cost them their lives. Of course, every Mennonite historian can cite examples of intolerance included in history books because of their flamboyant and dramatic qualities—they do "liven up" a history book—but by and large, the basic Mennonite conviction at the beginning of the denomination was that each man had a right, under God, to his own religious views, based upon his reading of the scriptures. Let our children see that side of Mennonite history rather than allowing a few modern "provincialists" to create the impression among our young people that Mennonites are nothing but a bigoted, narrow-minded group. These provincialists tend to influence our children toward the groups which seem more tolerant because of their position on "mores" such as styles of dress and modes of entertainment, but are more than merely intolerant when it comes to issues like consideration of differing viewpoints, the so-called inherent depravity of man or the supposed incapability of the layman to decipher the teachings of Jesus without papal interpretation. Herein lies religious bigotry.

Certain individuals within our group are narrow and intolerant; but the Mennonite faith was and is revolutionary, broad and forward looking, exciting and, above all, essentially Christian.

O'er the trackless ocean guided
By Thy hand our fathers came;
They, O Lord, in Thee confided,
Loved Thy day, revered Thy name;
Nor would we, their faith despising,
False to their devotion be,
But, on wings of pray'r arising,
Lift our contrite hearts to Thee.

In the new land, wild and lonely,
Rude the homes which they upraised,
There they sought unto Thee only,
There Thy love and mercy praised;
In our fairer habitations
May their zeal in us increase,
While Thy gracious consolations
Prove our everlasting peace.

Destined for their father's places,
Age on age until the end,
Keep, O keep, our children's faces
Turned to Thee, our changeless Friend;
And may all who boon of heaven
Now or evermore shall crave,
Know on earth Thy blessing given,
Glory find beyond the grave. Amen.

From *Mennonite Hymnary,* p. 165

DISCUSSION GROUP

(Continued from page 157)

cipline. That is, together in prayerful devotion the groups seek the will of God, and when the groups have found an answer, the individuals will be internally constrained to accept it because they have together participated in the search and experience the leading to the answer. The importance of the message probably did not get across to all people since some were expecting the usual approach on "the work of the Holy Spirit" and did not understand such a functioning of the Holy Spirit in the group process.

In terms of further understanding, the procedure involved in the discussion groups as a part of the ongoing Conference process, it might be well to present the steps involved in planning for the Bluffton Conference:

1) About nine months before the Conference, the program committee designated the discussion co-ordinator and the chairman of recorders' groups. The boards were requested to provide any special questions they wanted to have considered by the discussion groups. About six months prior to the Conference, lists of discussion leaders and recorders were compiled. A month before the Conference instruction sheets were mailed to discussion leaders and recorders.

2) Before the Conference began, all delegates and visitors registered in advance had been assigned to one of the twenty groups. The overflow was assigned to one of the two larger auditorium groups where, obviously, the groups were considerably larger than the average of thirty.

3) At the first day of the Conference, all discussion leaders, recorders and board resource people, a group of about 140, met with the co-ordinators. Assignments were made to specific rooms, board questions were made available, and there was a general discussion with regard to the approach. Leaders were instructed to wait upon the discussion group members for their questions and concerns. Board members were responsible to ask their board questions when they deemed it appropriate. But in the main the emphasis was upon encouraging the raising of honest questions and convictions regardless of disagreements that might be involved. Recorders were

ed particularly to record questions raised, suggestions concerns expressed, and trends within the major dision items.

) Immediately following the first discussion period, twenty recorders and their chairman met to hear orts from the various groups. From this questions, ids and suggestions were reported back to the conence floor and certain items to the resolutions comtee.

) The chairman of the recorders' group was given minutes of conference time to give a brief report in representative a manner as he could about what had en place in the twenty groups. Some criticism was ed that his report was too brief, that it was misleadat various points because of its selectivity. On the ole, it was very much appreciated and a stimulus to er conference discussion.

) Immediately following the Conference, all of the orders' notes were compiled for more detailed use by board and staff members. Boards in turn at their next eting will underscore items that need follow-up.

) At the close of the series of discussions, the leadmet for an evaluation of the program.

Evaluation of Bluffton Discussions

The endorsements of this approach seemed so nearly nimous that the dissenting voices may not have had courage to speak up even within a discussion frameork such as this!

Giving a more favorable opportunity for the delegate to voice his questions and concerns was of unquestionable value. Furthermore, in the smaller group the delegate experiences the conference fellowship and responsibility on much more of a face-to-face basis. The frankness of most groups was commendable in comparison to most floor discussions but perhaps still leaves considerably more to be realized.

The experience itself justified the small group procedure, but one would hope that the "feed back" to the Conference could be effectively realized. One would hope that the sense of those gathered in the name of the Lord would lead to increasingly more creative steps toward which the Holy Spirit is seeking to guide us.

Although the discussion groups have not as yet changed the basic nature of the triennial sessions or the workings of the Conference as a whole, one would like to think that they have been a corrective wedge toward more responsible participation by more delegates. This session of General Conference had more "concerns" expressed to the resolutions committee and directly on conference floor than any other Conference within the writer's experience. It is not clear whether this initiation was stimulated by more of a "talking up" atmosphere of the discussion groups. It may be that all of these trends simply originate from the increasingly felt question as to how we can be the church of believers as well as a large corporate body.

Books in Review

iebet und lobet Gott, Religiöse Lyrik, von Joost van den del, ausgewählt und übertragen von Katharina Fassbinder, einem Nachwort von W. Asselbergs, Eugen Diedrichs Verlag, seldorf-Köln, 1958. 62 pp.; DM 4.40.

hat Vondel (1587-1679), considered the greatest of Dutch s, still lives and can be brought to speak in a language not own, this little book is evidence. A few hymns taken from plays *Lucifer, Gijsbrecht van Aemstel,* etc., several individual es upon the death of family members, and a few other poems e up this small collection. All of them represent deep ious feelings. One cannot understand Vondel's verse, as lbergs emphasizes, without an awareness of the poet's ious experiences. The faith of Vondel, however, particuif one considers it throughout his long life, is a very lved subject. It may indicate that Anabaptist piety—Vondel the Mennonites and became a Catholic shortly after his 50th —is not as far from Catholic devotion as one might think, the transparent religious fervor of much of his work is a ty far cry from the baroque spirituality of the "Kreuzberg," s 42-44 (Die schönsten roten Rosen spriessen. . . . Wo Wunden liessen fliessen/Des Hauptes edles, heilig Blut). anthology is well worth owning and reading for its devoas well as its art.

ern Mennonite College — Irvin B. Horst

Vie das Werk begann. Entstehung der deutschen Baptistenemeinden, by Rudolf Donat, Kassel: J. G. Onckenverlag, 1958. pp., DM 22.—.

he Baptist Publishing House, J. G. Oncken, Kassel, Gery, has been extremely productive during the last decade an almost complete destruction of everything during ld War II. This volume tells the story of J. G. Oncken who was influenced by the Methodists and Baptists and transplanted the Baptist movement during the early 19th century to Hamburg, Germany. From here the movement spread through the northern and southern parts of Germany as well as east. By the middle of the 19th century, the movement had reached Denmark, Sweden, Austria, Hungary and Holland. Anyone who is interested in the beginning of the Baptist movement in Germany will want to consult this very valuable record.

Bethel College — Cornelius Krahn

Jeremia. Der Prophet tiefster Innerlichkeit und schwerster Seelenführung, Jakob Kroeker, 2nd edition, Giessen: Brunnen-Verlag, 1958. 290 pp., DM 11.80.

Daniel. Staatsmann und Prophet, Jakob Kroeker, 3rd edition, Giessen: Brunnen-Verlag, 1957. 237 pp., DM 9.80.

Allein mit dem Meister, Jakob Kroeker, Giessen: Spener-Verlag, 1952. 138 pp. DM 4.80.

Jakob Kroeker, a Mennonite from Russia, director of Licht im Osten, Wernigerode, Germany, wrote several volumes of Old Testament studies under the general title, *Das lebendige Wort* which were published before World War II and the death of the author. The Brunnen-Verlag is publishing a new edition of this set which had been out of print. The studies of Jeremiah and Daniel are the results of a lifelong study by the author of the prophets of the Old Testament. The author is not only thoroughly familiar with all Old Testament research, the history of Israel, but his application of the message of the prophets to our day represents the unique contribution of these volumes which will not become outdated. The same can be said regarding the devotional booklet, *Allein mit dem Meister.*

Bethel College — Cornelius Krahn

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Leland Harder as Christopher Dock and school children in Centennial pageant, "We Are Pilgrims."